

Kozyrev arrives in Egypt

CAIRO (Agencies) — Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev arrived in Egypt on Tuesday at the start of a Middle East tour aimed at helping the region's faltering peace process. Mr. Kozyrev told reporters in Moscow that his country, a joint sponsor with the United States of unilateral Middle East peace talks, believed U.S. efforts alone could not ensure progress. "The efforts of one state will not be enough to put the Middle East peace process on a dynamic track. We are now working in close cooperation with our American co-sponsors and the European Union," he said. Mr. Kozyrev will hold talks with his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa and Arab League Secretary General Emad Abdal Meguid on Tuesday. On Wednesday he will meet President Hosni Mubarak. The Russian foreign minister is also scheduled to visit Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Mr. Kozyrev's talks with President Mubarak also focus on the extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. "We have a very long relationship with Egypt and it is a very fruitful one. I am sure we will have productive talks," he said upon arrival. Mr. Kozyrev said he was bringing a special message to Mr. Mubarak from Russian President Boris Yeltsin, but did not divulge the contents.

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AIR FRANCE

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AMMAN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1995, SHAWAL 28, 1415

Volume 19 Number 5879

King: Jordan will set example, hopes for comprehensive peace

Christopher says congressional approval of debt relief for Jordan is assured, U.S. will honour its commitment

WASHINGTON (Agencies)

— U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher predicted Tuesday Congress would approve a package of \$480 million in debt relief for Jordan. His Majesty King Hussein said he was satisfied that the result of the move would be positive.

"I think people on Capitol Hill are responding," Mr. Christopher said at a joint conference after talks with the King.

Queen receives U.S. award

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday received an award from the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) in Washington, in recognition of "her outstanding work in the areas of social welfare, maternal and child health care, education and women's development," a Royal Court statement said.

In her remarks, Queen Noor spoke of the role of women in the new era of peace-building in the Middle East. She emphasised that it is

imperative for peace to endure and for the people of the region to work together to improve the quality of life and to promote stability for future generations, which can only be achieved through a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its tracks, the statement said.

The council, founded in 1893 to improve the lives of women, children and their communities, is a non-political volunteer organisation with nearly 90,000 members throughout the U.S.

(Continued on page 7)

Algerian journalists protest killings

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Protesting the assassinations of 30 journalists during a Muslim fundamentalist insurgency, 16 national newspapers merged into one for a day Tuesday to declare: "You will not silence us."

The paper, which reserved a page for each of the dailies, was titled "Al Moujahid," after the paper whose chief editor was shot and killed in an ambush in an eastern Algiers suburb.

There was no claim of responsibility for the slaying of Mohammad Abdul Rahmani, but suspicion fell on Muslim militants who have targeted reporters, intellectuals and foreigners as well as officials and security forces.

More than 30,000 people have died in the three-year-old insurgency that began when the military-backed government cancelled January 1992 elections. The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was expected to win.

"Terrorism will not make us bend," vowed an editorial by Al Moujahid.

Meanwhile, an Arabic newspaper distributed in Western capitals reported that the two top FIS leaders have been moved back from jail to house arrest.

Ahassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, sentenced in June 1991 to 12 years in prison for anti-government activity, were placed in separate residences, reported Al Hayat without citing its source.

Mr. Madani is in a residence in Douera, 15 kilometres southwest of Algiers, in the same place former President Ahmed Ben Bella was lodged after a 1965 military coup, the paper said.

Belhadj was moved to a residence 60 kilometres west of the capital, Al Hayat said.

Reports have conflicted over the whereabouts of Mr. Madani and Belhadj, who were moved out of prison in September during stepped-up contacts with the government but were reportedly reimprisoned in January after talks floundered.

It was not clear if the late-reported transfer signified improved contacts. President Liamine Zeroual has vowed to go ahead with presidential elections.

Israel, PLO make progress towards self-rule elections

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) reported progress Tuesday after the first of two days of talks in Cairo on elections for a Palestinian self-rule council.

"Negotiations have entered a new phase and we have begun working on a joint text (for elections)," Palestinian delegation chief Saeb Erakat told reporters.

"There has been agreement on many of the questions which were still up in the air."

His Israeli counterpart Yoel Singer was equally satisfied. "We focused on the structure of the council. We have completed the first reading of this chapter," he said.

"We have not yet reached agreement on all the elements of this chapter but we are trying to eliminate as many as differences as we can," he added.

The size of the autonomy

council to run the daily lives of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is still in dispute," Mr. Singer said.

Palestinians want a 100-member council, while Israel has proposed a much smaller body.

The PLO also insists that Israel give the 160,000 Palestinians in Arab East Jerusalem the right to stand in the elections. Israel has agreed to let them vote but refuses to allow them to be candidates.

Dr. Erakat said that differences over the relationship between executive and legislative powers in the council had begun to close, helped along by a previous agreement to elect the council separately.

The president "will choose the members of the executive authority and they will then be approved by the council," he said.

However, he admitted that the body would not be "identical to a parliament."

(Continued on page 7)

U.S. seeks oil ban on Libya; Qadhafi to break air embargo

WASHINGTON (Agencies)

— The United States will ask the United Nations to impose an oil embargo against Libya because of its refusal to turn over two suspects in the bombing of Pan Am flight 103, White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said on Tuesday.

"We have already begun ... consultations with members of the Security Council," Mr. McCurry told reporters at the White House.

A total of 270 people were killed when the Pan Am flight was destroyed in flight above Lockerbie, Scotland, on Dec. 21, 1988, including 259 passengers and crew members and 11 victims of the ground.

The United States and Britain in 1991 indicated two alleged Libyan intelligence operatives, Abdel Basset Ali Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimah, for the bombing.

Libya has refused to render the two suspects to stand trial. It says the two would get a fair trial and that it is ready to send them to trial in the World Court.

The decision to seek expanded United Nations sanctions against Libya was relayed by President Bill Clin-

"We have known since the beginning that there are limits on the powers," of the council.

Dr. Erakat added that Palestinians opposed to the peace process will not be barred from election.

"No one will check on the political affiliation of candidates or voters. There will merely be criteria like those throughout the world, but they will not be political."

The Jewish state had previously demanded that Hamas and Islamic Jihad be banned from the ballot.

Israel's Health Minister Ephraim Sneh has predicted that hardline militants will win up to 20 per cent of the votes.

"The results of these elections, which will undoubtedly take place in the coming months, will depend in part on the economic situation prevailing in the territories."

"They admitted they imported it but they could not account for where it had disappeared," Mr. Ekeus told reporters.

Iraqi officials "were not able to give us a satisfactory account of these imports, which makes us concerned that they used them for weapons production," the head of the U.N. Special Commission on Disarmament Iraq (UNSCOM) said.

The substances, he said, "are a breeding ground for bacteria which is used in hospitals in small amounts for testing and diagnostic purposes. It is distributed to hospitals in very small amounts."

Baghdad imported the substances, which many countries use for scientific and medical research, in 1989. But a mere 100 kilogrammes would usually be enough for a year for a country of Iraq's size and civilian requirements, Mr. Ekeus said.

U.N. disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus said after a mission to Baghdad that the missing quantities amounted to far more than the little needed in hospitals for diagnostic and testing purposes.

He said he had managed to trace 15,000 kilogrammes of the 32,000 kilogrammes of culture imported before the 1991 Gulf war, when U.S.-led forces freed Kuwait from seven months of Iraqi occupation.

"They admitted they imported it but they could not account for where it had disappeared," Mr. Ekeus told reporters.

"We have certain suspicions about one facility," he said, without elaborating.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahaf said in Cairo on Sunday that his country did not have any biological weapons and had no germ warfare programme.

He said Iraq bought 30 tonnes of monocellular protein in 1988, which is used for

(Continued on page 7)

Ekeus: Iraq may have biological weapons

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies)

— Iraq has raised fears it might have made biological weapons by failing to account for 17,000 tonnes of culture for breeding bacteria, a senior U.N. official said here Tuesday.

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(Continued on page 7)

Villagers flee Turkish forces in Iraq

ZAKHO (Agencies)

— More than 1,500 villagers fled in vehicles loaded with goats and belongings Tuesday as Turkish troops battled hard against Kurdish guerrillas. At least 97 rebels were killed in the fighting, officials said.

The growing streams of refugees could increase Western pressure on Turkey, which sent troops across the border last week to strike the planes being shot down.

"We will defend the sanctuaries and travel to Mecca as before the embargo on board planes of the Libyan airlines," Colonel Qadhafi said in the town of Tora near the Egyptian border.

"We will see during the next pilgrimage if Saudi Arabia is an independent country or it bows to the United States and raises obstacles" for the annual pilgrimage, to take place this year in May, he said.

"If that's the case, it will not have the right to control Mecca and the tomb of the Prophet," he said.

He said Riyadh would "face an unprecedented political crisis because either the Libyan planes will be shot down in the airspace of the

(Continued on page 7)

U.S. wants outside help to free Americans in Iraq

WASHINGTON (Agencies)

— The United States is seeking help from France, Russia and Turkey in its efforts to win freedom for two Americans imprisoned in Iraq for illegally entering the country from Kuwait.

"The law applies to offenders and their entry is illegal," parliament's foreign affairs committee rapporteur Hassib Aref told AFP, adding, however, that the case could "be settled through diplomatic means and not by threats."

"It's routine case which happens between states and which doesn't require the international diplomatic committee caused by the United States," the deputy said.

France, Russia and Turkey are eager for an end to U.N. sanctions so they can resume normal business dealings with Iraq. Turkey claims the sanctions against Iraq, its neighbour, have cost the Turkish economy \$20 billion.

The U.S. officials, asking not to be identified, said the administration also is seeking assistance from some Arab countries, which they refused to identify.

Also aiding the U.S. effort, the officials said, is Poland, whose diplomats in Baghdad represent U.S. interests in Iraq.

In Baghdad, an Iraqi parliament member said the United States ought to use diplomacy rather than threats in its efforts to win the release of two Americans.

The U.S. officials, asking not to be identified, said the administration also is seeking assistance from some Arab countries, which they refused to identify.

Mr. Aref also repeated an Iraqi offer for talks between legislators from Baghdad and Kuwait "to discuss all outstanding issues. We don't have any problem discussing any issue, including that of the Kuwaitis missing."

Kuwait is urging Iraq to release 609 prisoners and missing persons from the 1991 Gulf war. Iraq denies it is holding such people.

eration and have appealed to Turkey nor to harm or uproot civilians.

Germany suspended \$107 million in government subsidies to German shipbuilders as part of a deal to sell frigates to Turkey. Ms. Ciller plans to meet with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington on April 18.

Western diplomats in Ankara insist that Turkey has not yet given concrete plans about how to maintain security in northern Iraq once the operation ends.

Turkey undertook a similar six-week offensive in northern Iraq involving 20,000 troops in 1992. But the PKK regrouped after their withdrawal.

A Western diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the most likely scenario was for Turkey to maintain military strongholds in northern Iraq after the main force withdraws.

The Turkish campaign took

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House on Monday (AFP photo)

Home & Middle East News

JORDAN TIMES, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1995

Nuclear issues remain on Mideast 'front burner'

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Nuclear arms control or proliferation in the Middle East will remain a "front burner" issue for the foreseeable future in the opinion of a leading American and an Israeli strategist. This is true despite Egypt's recent failure to withhold Arab endorsement of the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty pending Israel's adherence to the international accord.

His assessment came from Michael Eisenstadt, a senior fellow in military affairs at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and it was implicitly endorsed by Shai Feldman, director of a project on "Security and Arms Control in the Middle East" at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies.

Both spoke at the institute March 23 on the Clinton administration's effort to win worldwide support for an indefinite extension of the NPT and the proposed sale of Russian nuclear reactors to Iran among other related issues. The 1970 treaty is scheduled for review in New York on April 17.

The Arab League, meeting last Thursday in Cairo on the foreign minister's level, condemned Israel's suspected nuclear arsenal, but refused to endorse Egypt's efforts to gain Arab endorsement of the pact's extension to Israeli members of the 172-nation treaty aimed at limiting the spread of nuclear weapons.

"It is my gut feeling that nuclear arms control will remain a front burner issue for at least some of the countries of the region for some time," declared Eisenstadt, the author of a forthcoming monograph on Iranian rearmament and military strategy and "Like a Phoenix from the Ashes: The Future of Iraqi Military Power."

Although the NPT conference may have been the "precipitating" event that pushed the nuclear issue to the top of

the regional agenda, he added, "the nuclear issue has become an important—even a core concern for Egypt—and for various reasons, it is likely to remain near the top of Cairo's agenda after the conference."

Feldman agreed and recalled that Egypt had similarly orchestrated—but with more success—the Arab refusal to endorse the chemical weapons convention in 1993 because of Israel's refusal to join the NPT.

The Israeli strategist also pointed out that to Egypt's credit, it had the only Foreign Ministry in the region with a cadre of serious people dealing with arms control issues.

He recalled that Egypt was the first Middle Eastern country "to come out with a nuclear weapons free zone proposal," and that President Mubarak in 1990 was the first to suggest zones of free a weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Egyptians, he emphasized, take arms control seriously, and consequently Egypt "could hardly take a soft position" on the NPT extension.

Eisenstadt raised the possibility that some Arab states including Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, may take the nuclear route if the Arab world is not successful in dismantling Israel's nuclear arsenals. He also saw this outcome should U.S. and international efforts aimed at thwarting Iran or Iraq from acquiring a nuclear technology not be met "with at least some visible success."

He cited several "incentives" for a forthcoming monograph on Iranian rearmament and military strategy and "Like a Phoenix from the Ashes: The Future of Iraqi Military Power."

Although the NPT conference may have been the "precipitating" event that pushed the nuclear issue to the top of

the nuclear route is their only option in the face of an American assault "since the U.S. was not deterred by the prospect of chemical or biological warfare" during the Gulf war.

In the case of countries like Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, Eisenstadt said, "Nuclear weapons may become an increasingly desirable alternative to 'potentially unreliable' U.S. security guarantees." He was referring to the budget cuts in the U.S. military and the "growing isolationist strain which in a few years could be a mainstream trend."

While the calls for the creation for a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the region have become more widespread, he concluded, "the incentives and potential for nuclear proliferation have grown."

Feldman expressed doubt that Israel will abandon its nuclear programme before the attainment of peace in the entire region.

This is the worst time for anyone to bring up the question of Israel's nuclear capability, he explained, since Israel has not given up on the possibility that "this coming year will be the year of Syria." In other words, he continued, "the cost and compromises that will have to be made in the Israel-Syrian equation" will make it difficult for the Israeli government to simultaneously abandon "two arms of its deterrence equation."

He saw Israel in an "evolving strategic relationship" in the region should the peace process expand. "The Israelis will no longer be able to define some problems in the area—like Iran—as solely an Arab problem but a regional problem." The implication, he noted, is that Israel will have to weigh in Iran's nuclear potential in its strategic considerations.

Kurdish history — broken promises

ANKARA (R) — The history of the Kurds has been one of broken promises, failed deals, repression by the governments of the region, and internal feuding.

The Kurds, estimated to number 15 million to 20 million, are a non-Arab, Sunni Muslim people who speak a language related to Persian and live in a mountainous area straddling the borders of Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan and Syria.

They were mentioned by the Greek historian Xenophon as long ago as 400 B.C. Saladin, the Islamic leader who fought the Christian Crusaders in the 12th century, was a Kurd.

But for virtually all their history they have been subjugated by stronger neighbours. In modern times, Turkey, Iraq and Iran have firmly resisted an independent Kurdish state and the Western powers have seen no reason to help establish one.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August, 1990, and subsequent victory by allied forces over the Iraqi army in February, 1991, sparked a rebellion against Baghdad by the Kurds as well as other Iraqi dissidents.

The crushing response by the Iraqi army caused a mass exodus of Kurdish refugees and the United States, Britain and France responded by imposing a no-fly zone over northern Iraq, using bases in Turkey.

The two main Iraqi Kur-

dish groups in the region failed to work out a power-sharing agreement and fighting flared sporadically between them.

By 1974 it was open war again and a government offensive forced some 130,000 Kurds to take refuge in Iran. The rebellion collapsed the following year after Iran withdrew aid in return for border concessions from Iraq in the Shatt Al Arab waterway.

The Iran-Iraq war, which broke out in 1980 and lasted eight years, gave the Kurds another chance to exploit regional hostilities for their own benefit.

The revolutionary turmoil in Iran allowed them to establish a no-go area for government troops but they were unable to hold onto it for long.

In 1984, the Iraqi government was reported to have reached a settlement with Jalal Talabani, leader of one of the main Kurdish parties. But this too broke down over questions of cabinet posts for Kurds and the control of Kurdish forces.

The same year a Kurdish revolt broke out in Turkey, where the Kurds were not recognized as a separate race or allowed to speak their own language in public—a ban since lifted.

More than 15,000 people are estimated to have died in Turkey since 1984 when the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) launched its fight for a separate state in the southeast.

Finally in 1970 an agree-

ment was reached allowing for linguistic rights and self-rule in Kurdish areas as well as Kurdish participation in the Baghdad government.

But it broke down, partly

because of the Kurdish

rebellion in Turkey.

Under the leadership of Mustafa Barzani, the Iraqi Kurds waged an intermittent struggle against Baghdad after World War II. Their "Peshmerga" (meaning "those who face death") guerrillas continued the fight after the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in 1958.

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border concessions from Iraq

in the Shatt Al Arab water-

way.

When the PKK was formed, Mr. Ocalan committed it to armed struggle "so as not to lose time for the Kurdish cause in political debates."

He fled Turkey before the

military coup of September

1980 and has lived in exile

since, mostly in the Syrian

capital Damascus or in the

Bekaa Valley in Lebanon under Syrian control where he has set up general head-

quarters and a training camp

for PKK militants. But the

camp was closed down in

1992 under Turkish pressure

on Syria and Lebanon.

It was in August 1984 that

Apo (a diminutive of Abdül-

rahim) decided to launch full-

scale war against Turkish

forces, reckoning he had

enough manpower. Because

PKK operations often in-

clude attacks against Kurdish

villages which refuse to

cooperate, the government

repudiated Mr. Ocalan as a

murderer and refuses to

negotiate, even if he laid

down his arms.

In March 1993 he declared

a unilateral ceasefire, which

lasted until May, asking for

political dialogue, but the

government took no notice.

Mr. Ocalan argues it is of

the utmost importance to re-

store Kurdish individuality,

which he says "Turkish colo-

nialists" have repressed for

years. He makes his speeches

in Turkish, nonetheless, and

uses the language for contacts

with the press.

He used regularly to write

editorials, under the pen

name Ali Firat, in the

Turkish-language pro-

Kurdish newspaper Ozgur

Ulke, until it was suspended,

from publication in January.

He is now writing for

the magazine "Ozgur

Ulke" in Ankara.

He is also writing for the

newspaper "Ozgur

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His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, the Regent, Tuesday receives Bahraini Minister of Trade and Agriculture Habib Qassem at the Royal Court (Petra photo)

Prince Abdullah receives visiting Bahraini minister

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, the Regent, Tuesday received at the Royal Court Bahraini Minister of Trade and Agriculture Habib Qassem, who is also chairman of the Executive Council of the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (AOAD) which opened its meetings in Amman Monday.

Prince Abdullah said Jordan has always been supportive of any joint Arab action aiming to serve the interests of the Arab nation.

The Arab nation, he stressed, requires every possible effort to ensure its progress and achieve prosperity for its peoples, particularly at the present stage when changes are sweeping the world area.

Mr. Qassem on his part, thanked His Majesty King Hussein and Jordan for hosting the council's meeting in Amman and voiced pride in Jordan's pioneering role in supporting joint Arab action and solidarity.

The meeting was attended by the King's advisor Mohammad Rasoul Kilani, Agriculture Minister Mansour Ben Tarif and Ministry of Agriculture Secretary General Ghaleb Ahsan Orahi.

The AOAD Executive Council met for the second

day Tuesday and discussed a proposal to start presenting an annual award for Arab researchers in agriculture and irrigation-related fields.

The proposal was referred to the organisation's general assembly to decide on the issue of its next meeting.

The council then discus-

sed AOA's 1994 financial and administrative reports presented by organisation Director General Yahya Bakkour.

The report stated that the organisation's general assembly had decided to allocate \$6,445,000 for the organisation's budget this year and \$6,560,550 for 1996.

Bahrain, UAE seek to advance ties with Jordan'

AMMAN (Petra) — Bahraini Minister of Trade and Agriculture Habib Qassem Tuesday described Jordanian-Bahraini relations strong and distinguished at all levels, particularly in economic fields.

An interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, on the sidelines of the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (AOAD) Executive Council meeting in Amman, Mr. Qassem said the trade exchange between the two countries was continuously growing and that it ranges between \$27-30 million annually, with some years hitting the \$30 million mark.

He voiced hope that this cooperation will strengthen in the future, noting that there was a strong desire by the two sides to activate their joint efforts in economic and trade fields.

He pointed out that the Jordanian-Bahraini joint committee will meet soon to discuss means of advancing ties.

He underlined that officials and delegations from the two countries always exchange visits and added that the Bahraini government was looking forward to a visit by Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abu Ragheh to his country in April when the Jordanian products exhibition will be opened in Manama.

Meanwhile, United Arab Emirates (UAE) Minister of Agriculture Saeed Raqabi, who is participating in the AOAD meetings, commended the pioneering agricultural projects in Jordan and the use of modern irrigation technologies. Praising Jordanian-UAE ties, he said his country was keen to enhance bilateral ties in all fields.

IAF calls on Algeria to release political detainees, launch dialogue

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Islamic Action Front (IAF), which represents Jordan's mainstream Islamist movement, on Tuesday called on the Algerian authorities to release all political detainees and launch a national dialogue to settle the country's two-year-old crisis.

The IAF also offered its good offices to mediate among the conflicting parties in Algeria saying it was in the interests of the Arab and Islamic world to end the violence in the North African country.

The front also called on the Algerian regime to accept the results of 1992 elections, which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win, but were cancelled by the army. The FIS was subsequently outlawed and many of its supporters jailed.

The front also called on the

The army move sparked a deep crisis in Algeria, with FIS supporters and members of other militant groups taking up arms against the regime.

Up to 30,000 people, civilians, security forces and foreign residents, are believed to have been slain in the violence since then.

The IAF's call, contained in a two-page statement made available to the Jordan Times, came amid reports from Algeria that up to 800 militants were killed in a massive army operation against the dissident groups in the country.

"What is happening in Algeria now benefits nobody but the enemies of Islam," said the IAF statement.

"Those who have scored victories against the enemies also deserve victory against their own internal difference," it said in what appeared to be a reference to a reported infighting among the various Islamic factions in Algeria.

"We call upon everybody to shoulder their responsibility in a framework of ... Arab and Islamic brotherhood," said the statement.

It denounced the army role in Algerian politics, saying the army's responsibility was to protect the country from external threats and not to get involved in internal poli-

cies.

The IAF said it was calling for a "general amnesty for all political prisoners," particularly for jailed FIS leaders Abdes Madani and Ali Belhadj, and "an end to the campaign of arrests and imprisonment which will only result in negative consequences."

"We have to respect the minds and souls of our sons," said the statement.

"We also caution our brethren in Algeria of foreign interference, particularly from France and the United States," it added.

The Jordanian party also offered its good offices to mediate the Algerian conflict.

"We, as an Islamic party, are ready to do what we can to get Algeria out of this crisis through meetings among the conflicting parties and attempts to convince them to accept a settlement that will unite the people and not separate them."

Arab-Israeli committee to resume discussions on displaced Palestinians

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An Arab-Israeli technical committee will meet on April 7 to resume discussions on the fate of Palestinians displaced in the 1967 war, sources said Tuesday amid reports that Israel has drawn up a paper that categorises the displaced into eight groups and estimating their number at 500,000.

The sources, who preferred anonymity, noted that the first meeting of the foreign ministers of Jordan, Egypt and Israel and a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Amman on March 7 set up the technical committee which would discuss the modalities and mechanisms for defining and discussing the repatriation of the displaced.

"The technical committee which represents all the four parties, will meet on April 7, but the venue for the meeting is not decided yet," said one source.

During the ministerial meeting in Amman in March, Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Pines declined to acknowledge the right of the displaced to return to their homeland and spoke in general terms which shifted the responsibility for the displaced from Israel to the international community.

The Arab sides to the meeting分歧 the outcome of the meeting as disappointing.

According to a report carried in the local press, Israel had presented a paper, prepared by former military intelligence chief Shlomo Gazit, which categorised the displaced into four groups.

The first four groups which are eligible for repatriation, according to the report, are:

— Palestinians who were staying outside the occupied territories but were permanent residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This would include those who were working outside their homeland.

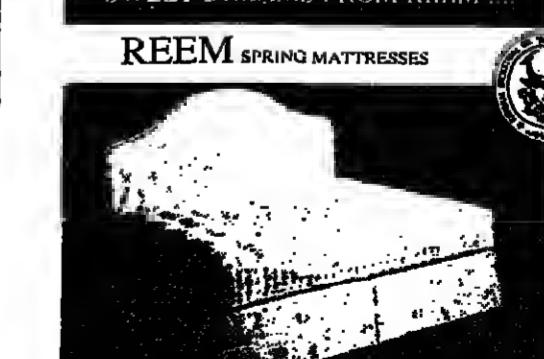
— Palestinians who left the territories with the Jordanian army in the 1967 war.

— Palestinians who had permits to enter the West Bank and Gaza Strip but who decided not to go back.

— Palestinians who left in the second half of 1967 — after the war — to join family members outside (who might have fled during the war).

The four other groups,

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'Social development ministries, foreign voluntary societies should coordinate work'

AMMAN (Petra) — Social Development Minister Salwa Damen-Masri Tuesday stressed the need for foreign voluntary societies operating in Jordan to present their annual budgets and plans to the ministry and that these projects be compatible with the goals of the societies.

The minister also called for developing the traditional activities of these societies, urging them to focus on income-generating and developmental projects.

Stressing that the ministry will support any feasible project or activity, she highlighted the importance of coordinating the activities of voluntary societies and having them adhere to their annual plans and reports presented to the ministry to enable the concerned authorities to follow up and supervise these activities.

Ms. Damen-Masri also called for activating the role of a committee set up by the ministry and several societies to follow up these projects and to call for a meeting in the near future.

The meeting was attended by representatives of eight foreign societies operating in the Kingdom.

financial assistance for the joint venture is a very good and very detailed feasibility study.

In turn, acceptance of the project by nine of the financing schemes recognises the feasibility of the project, he added.

Other objectives pursued by the ICE are acquainting the Italian import market with Jordanian goods as well as promoting Italian exports to Jordan.

ICE disseminates information in Italy via a computer network, Telemarket, and through its own weekly publication, "Sistema Italia."

Assessing the progress which has been achieved since the ICE office was opened in December, Mr. Salameh said that while some joint ventures were already in the making, only one serious request for supplying the Italian market with Jordanian products had come forward, namely for Dead Sea cosmetics.

Two sources of financing for joint ventures abroad exist in Italy, the European Community Investment Programme (ECIP) and the SIMEST.

ICE organised a series of events during which participants learned more about the ICE as well as Italy's trade laws.

The Amman office, a representative office of the ICE's regional office in Beirut, was opened in response to a request by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan during his visit to Italy in 1993.

The office, which is temporarily housed in the Italian embassy in Amman, will be responsible for Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule areas in Gaza and Jericho. Other regional ICE offices are located in Saudi Arabia and Tel Aviv. The ICE has a total of 81 offices worldwide, as well as 39 offices in the provinces of Italy.

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Forrest Gump dominates awards with 6 Oscars

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Forrest Gump, the story of an Alabama simpleton whose optimism propels him to fame and fortune, dominated the Oscars Monday, with six awards including best film, best actor and best director.

The film earned back-to-back Oscars for Tom Hanks — putting the 38-year-old in an elite crowd with five other actors — and gave blockbuster king Robert Zemeckis his first Oscar for best director in an evening that yielded few surprises.

The 67th annual Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences presentation handed veteran stars Jessica Lange and Dianne Wiest their second Oscars. Lange was honoured for best actress while Wiest took home the Academy Award for best supporting actress.

Martin Landau won best supporting actor, his first in a lengthy career.

The awards proceeded as expected with hundreds of women wearing some of the nation's most glittering finery and tuxedo-clad men looking on at the Shrine Auditorium here.

More than one billion people in over 100 countries tuned into the four-hour broadcast.

The results disappointed critics and fans who had hoped for last-minute salvation for dark horses such as Pulp Fiction, which entered the competition with seven nominations but left with only one for best screenplay.

Tales of underdogs coming out on top — one of Hollywood's favourite plots — proved hard to come by Monday as events unfolded.

Gump was a smash from the beginning with audiences and critics embracing it with abandon, eating up the syrupy-sweet optimism that its lead character thrived on. It entered the contest with 13 nominations.

"I would like to thank motion picture audiences all around the world. In historic numbers you have embraced a film that at its heart offers a human, life-affirming, hopeful story," Director Robert Zemeckis said as he accepted

his Oscar. Gump has earned nearly \$600 million worldwide, reportedly paying Hanks and Zemeckis roughly \$35 million each.

Gump stumbles through life comforted by such motherly platitudes as: "Life's like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get."

The dim-witted by emerges as a star athlete who goes on to win a football championship and meet President John Kennedy through a computer-generated exchange melding footage of Kennedy with images of Hanks.

Hollywood's nod to Lange, 45, for her performance in Blue Sky as a woman who falls prey to child-like emotions to act out her frustrations, cements her claim to fame as one of Hollywood's heavy hitters. Blue Sky won even though it sat on a shelf for four years after the company that made it, Orion, folded.

Lange's career bloomed in the 1980s. She won an Oscar for her role in Tootsie (1982), the comic story of a male actor (Dustin Hoffman) who dressed in drag in order to get an acting job.

Wiest, 46, played the comically aging, egocentric 1920's diva in Woody Allen's Bullets Over Broadway.

Wiest's win was expected since she look home the Los Angeles Film Critics Award, the New York Film Critics Award, and the National Society of Film Critics Award, all for her best supporting actress. She also won a Golden Globe.

Wiest's last Oscar victory came in 1986 with the best supporting actress award for Hannah And Her Sisters, another Woody Allen project.

The award for the 66-year-old Landau for best supporting actor in Ed Wood capped nearly 40 years of stage, screen and television acting. His performance was the saving grace that put the box office boom on the critics' map.

Even the Russians, who face tumultuous times at

home, were able to glean some Hollywood joy with their winning entry Burnt By The Sun, taking the best foreign language film Oscar.

As for the show itself, host David Letterman's remarks about how long and boring it was rebounded bitterly when his own jokes fell flat. The saving grace was a manic dog that chased its tail frenetically whenever anybody clapped.

It was the only real surprise of the evening.

"I feel as though I'm standing on magic legs in a special effects process; that is too unbelievable to imagine and far too costly to make a reality," an emotional Hanks told the cheering audience in his acceptance speech.

"Believe me, the power and the pleasure and the emotion of this moment is a constant speed of light," Hanks said, tears welling in his eyes. "It will never be diminished, nor will my appreciation and the meaning between two simple words that I can only offer you here: thank you."

Blue Sky took an unlikely path to the Oscars: It was shelved for three years because of studio financial troubles; its director, Tony Richardson, died before it was released, and it was a box-office flop despite good reviews.

"This is such a wonderful honour, especially for a little film that seemed to have no future," said Lange.

Just as Gump was favoured

for the top awards, Lange, Landau and Wiest all had been expected to win in their categories. Landau was the only first-time winner in an acting category.

"God, what a night, what a life, what a moment, what everything," a teary-eyed Landau exclaimed, beaming at director Tim Burton for giving him "the part of my life" in the quirky film about Wood, a 1950's movie ranked affectionately by some as the worst director of all time.

For Wiest, it was the second supporting award. She buried exuberantly to the podium and announced, as she began reading her



Academy Award winners, from left, Martin Landau, best supporting actor; Dianne Wiest, best supporting actress; Jessica Lange, best actress, and Tom Hanks, best actor, hold the Oscars they won at the 67th annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles (AP photo)



Director Robert Zemeckis (left) holds the Oscar he won as best director for the film Forrest Gump as he poses with Steven Spielberg, who presented the award to Zemeckis at the 67th annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles 27 March. Forrest Gump won six Oscars, including best picture, best actor, and best director. (AP photo)

Thalberg Award for consistently high quality of motion picture production, and Quincy Jones received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award.

Clinton embarks on longest trip of the year

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton embarks Tuesday on his longest trip of the year to date, a week-long jaunt to talk about economics, greet U.S. troops in Haiti, and visit with friends back home in Arkansas.

Mr. Clinton was to depart in late afternoon for Atlanta, where he will make evening remarks to the Atlanta Committee on Olympic Games that is preparing for the 1996 summer Olympics.

Joined by Vice President Al Gore and other top administration officials, he is to preside Wednesday over the Southern Regional Economic Conference, a seven-hour talkfest at Emory University that the White House hopes will show Mr. Clinton in a favourable light in the south, where he is unpopular despite his Arkansas roots.

The conference, similar to one Mr. Clinton held in Little Rock, Arkansas, after he was elected president but before he took office, is to review the regional economy, examine strains on working families, take a look at innovations in education and training and ways to invest in sustained growth and high-wage jobs.

It is to be the first of four such conferences the White House will stage across the country as the president heads into his 1996 re-election campaign.

Mr. Clinton is to make a campaign-style sweep through Florida Thursday — speaking to a joint session of the Florida legislature in the state capital of Tallahassee, then moving on to Tampa for an event, then on to West Palm Beach for the night.

The president flies to Haiti Friday morning to celebrate what has been a foreign policy success — the U.S. occupation of the tiny Caribbean nation to put back in power elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and plans to turn over peacekeeping to a U.N. force.

Mrs Clinton visits Mother Teresa's orphanage school

NEW DELHI (AFP) — U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton cuddled babies and sang with children at Mother Teresa's orphanage Tuesday on the first day of a visit she said would build ties of "friendship and partnership" with India.

Mr. Clinton, who arrived here from Pakistan on the second leg of a 12-day South Asian tour, spent some 40 minutes at the suburban orphanage and announced that she would donate around 20 beds to the well-known home.

"They are all very beautiful children," the wife of President Bill Clinton said after being draped with garlands of pink flowers by two girls. "It is very nice and beautiful. So peaceful."

Mrs. Clinton, who is known for her concern for women's and children's

issues, kissed and cuddled babies, lifted boys and girls in her arms and sang along with some children.

She walked around the complex slowly despite urging by aides to hurry up, repeatedly folding her hands in greeting to the sisters of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity who run the 35-year-old orphanage, home to 164 children, mostly under two years of age.

Mrs. Clinton, who was accompanied by her daughter Chelsea and a 15-member delegation, praised the work done by Calcutta-based Nobel Peace laureate Mother Teresa and the orphanage.

Sister Joann, the senior official at the orphanage, said Mother Teresa had wanted to speak to Mr. Clinton by telephone from Calcutta but missed her by a few minutes.

Public prosecutor Carlo

Murdered maid's body exhumed in Philippine probe

MANILA (R) — The Philippines exhumed the corpse of a murder victim Tuesday in a macabre twist to a dispute with Singapore over the execution of a Filipino maid.

President Fidel Ramos said public anger over the affair had put his own neck on the line.

The body of Delia Maga,

maid Flor Contemplacion had confessed, was dug up at a cemetery in her home town of Victoria, 70 kilometres south of Manila.

About 100 people gathered

around the grave, in contrast to the thousands who showed up Sunday to give Contemplacion a martyr's funeral in the town of San Pablo, just 30 kilometres from Victoria.

National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents probed the skeletal remains with sticks and took a set of dentures, witnesses told Reuters.

Contemplacion, a 42-year-old mother of four, was hanged in Singapore on March 17 after confessing to killing Maga and a three-year-old Singaporean boy.

The execution provoked a diplomatic rift between the Philippines and Singapore after the island republic rejected impassioned Philippine appeals for a postponement.

Despite her confessions, many Filipinos believe Contemplacion was innocent and Mr. Ramos has ordered an inquiry into the case.

Italy police probe business motive in Gucci death

MILAN (R) — Investigators said Tuesday business deals may have been behind the murder of Maurizio Gucci, the former head of Italy's Gucci fashion dynasty.

They are trying to establish

a motive in the killing of Gucci, 45, shot dead outside his office in Milan Monday by a well-dressed assassin who fled by car.

Public prosecutor Carlo

Nocerino, who heads the inquiry, said he also expected to travel to Switzerland, where Mr. Gucci was officially resident, to pursue his investigations.

Police believe the gunman, who was in his 30s or 40s, used a pistol fitted with a silencer.

"We are following every

trail but the one which seems more probably is the trail

linked to the victim's business affairs. For that reason I also intend to go to Switzerland to carry out investigations," Mr. Nocerino told reporters.

Police Tuesday said they had developed a firm identification picture of the killer but needed to interview more witnesses.

They will include a guard at the building, Giuseppe Onorato, who is recovering

in hospital from a bullet wound to the shoulder. Mr. Gucci's first wife, Patrizia, has also been interviewed, police said.

Mr. Gucci sold his 50 percent stake in the family business for a reported \$150 million to \$200 million in 1993 to the Arab investment bank Investcorp, which had bought out the half share held by his three cousins in 1987.



O.J. Simpson stands up to leave the courtroom in Los Angeles as Judge Lance (left) called an early recess as a result of a telephone bomb threat. Behind Simpson is Deputy Sheriff Guy Magnera (AP photo)

Clark attacks Kaelin; suggests Simpson fought with ex-wife day of murders

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Reprehended by the judge for asking one inflammatory question, prosecutor Marcia Clark quickly popped another Monday, asking whether O.J. Simpson argued with his ex-wife by phone the day she and a friend were murdered.

Simpson's former houseguest, Brian "Kato" Kaelin, insisted in his fourth day on the witness stand that he knew nothing about such a phone conversation between the Simpsons.

"Isn't it true, Mr. Kaelin, that Mr. Simpson told you he'd had a conversation with Nicole on his cell phone while he was at the Riviera Country Club in which he had an argument with her?" Ms. Clark asked.

"No," Mr. Kaelin replied. After the brief conference, Ms. Clark posed her question about the phone conversation again, in two different phrasings, but raised no objections from the defense.

Mr. Kaelin was told to return Tuesday after his testimony was abbreviated by a bomb threat and a shortened court day. Court was recessed early so a juror, accompanied by a guard, could attend a funeral.

"I don't know if he was Simpson, saying 'Nicole didn't let me see Sydney. I want to see my daughter. Oh, boy.'

He spoke in a soft voice that he said reflected Simpson's demeanor. "The degree of upset, it's such a hard

thing," Mr. Kaelin explained.

Ms. Clark apparently started the defense and Mr. Kaelin with the question about a cellular phone conversation she suggested occurred while Simpson was at the Riviera Country Club the morning before the murders.

Mr. Kaelin offered no evidence such a conversation had taken place and the defense objected to the question, setting off one of many long conferences at the judge's bench.

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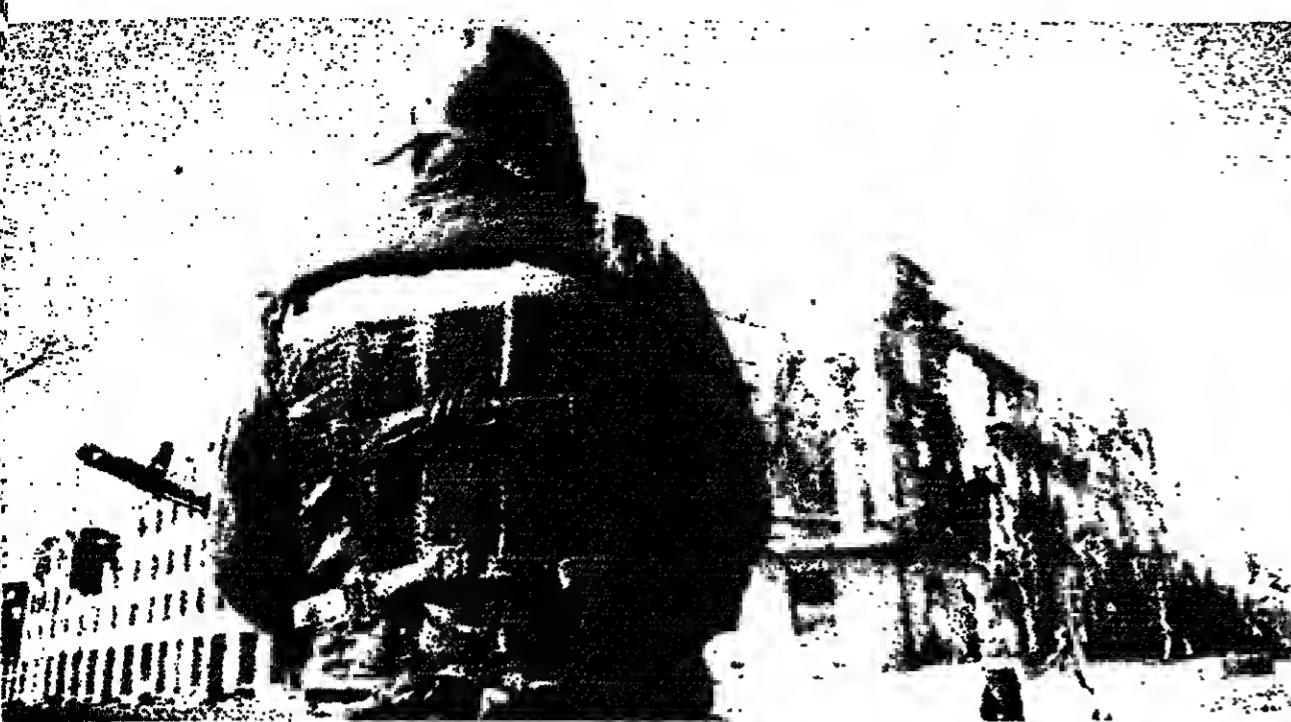
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Russian soldier patrols the centre of Grozny, as a young Chechen boy pulls his belongings. Thousands of people are returning to the capital which is a scene of almost total destruction following the month-long assault by Russia.

Russians hammer Chechen stronghold of Shali

SERZHEN YURT, Russia (AFP) — Russian forces attacked the Chechen separatist stronghold of Shali and surrounding villages with warplanes, helicopters and heavy guns Tuesday.

A 30-minute air raid by at least three jets followed an assault on the area by helicopter gunships and tanks and nightlong artillery exchanges.

However, there had been no major changes in either Chechen or Russian positions, said Rustam Idrisov, a fighter just out of Shali.

The planes dived about 20 times from high altitude, dropping bombs, firing barrages of rockets and opening up with heavy machineguns before peeling back up into the sky.

There were occasional bursts of ineffectual return fire by Chechen independence fighters armed with automatic rifles.

The raid was aimed at Shali and the nearby villages of Germenchuk and Avtury. The outskirts of Serzhen Yurt, which lies on the heavily travelled main road leading into the Caucasus Mountains, were also hit.

After the raid, smoke could also be seen coming out of a village near the frontline just west of Shali, where Russian tanks are massed.

Three hours later, six warplanes circled high over the area and a village meeting, held to decide whether or not to resist the approaching Russians, had to be abandoned.

The planes then flew west and distant explosions could be heard.

Earlier Tuesday, there was a heavy engagement between

the two sides' big guns. Russian tank shells exploded every few minutes among buildings on the edge of Shali and along the road linking Shali to Avtury, sending up clouds of dirt and rubble.

Chechen forces fired on Russian positions with rockets and artillery from hills and nightlong artillery exchanges.

"Last night I lay in a hole in the ground like a rat. What else could I do? I want to live. This automatic (rifle) is almost useless. There are no people to fight our there, only machines," he said.

"All you get is boom, boom and three or four of the people near you disappear. There's just bits of their clothing, or their legs have gone," he said.

"In Shali, there's nothing to eat, nothing to drink, look how thin I am," he said.

"We'll have to go to the mountains, that will be much better for us," he said.

As a plane flew over, the said, "no problem, Allah is with us."

Mr. Maskhadov said his men could make the war a "nightmare" for the Russians in the Caucasus.

But thousands of refugees,

from Shali and other places, are crammed into small mountain villages and the Russian Air Force has shown itself clearly willing to bomb civilians.

On Monday, Russian jets made a coordinated and massive attack on at least four refugee camps in Serzhen Yurt and further south. The raids, in which planes bombed, fired rockets and strafed, killed at least nine refugees and wounded 23.

There were no signs of Chechen military activity at

any of the camps, where more than 1,600 refugees were sheltering from the war.

Tens of thousands of Russian troops poured into Chechnya on Dec. 11 to crush President Dzhokhar Dudayev's unilateral declaration of independence from the Russian Federation.

The Russian defense minister expected a quick victory, but despite an overwhelming advantage in terms of weapons, his men have met fierce resistance at every village and town.

The commander of Russian troops in Chechnya said Tuesday he would not hold ceasefire talks with rebels unless they laid down their arms and disbanded, Interfax News Agency said.

It quoted Colonel-General Anatoly Kulikov as saying at campaign headquarters in Mozdok, just north of Chechnya, that Russian troops were continuing to break up rebel forces.

He said the rebels had lost most of their heavy weapons, their command structure had been disrupted and their reserves were dwindling.

But the Russian agency also quoted an unnamed high-ranking military source as saying Chechen forces were still holding out in the west of the rebel stronghold of Gudermes, about 45 kilometres east of the regional capital Grozny.

"The north and the south of the town is virtually completely blocked, but from the western side the militants are resisting fiercely," it quoted the source as saying.

Russian forces planned to encircle Gudermes completely. "In the next few days," the source was quoted as saying.

Female members of the cult, the Aum Supreme Truth, are blocked by riot policemen as they try to enter a building currently under police inspection in Kamikishiki village. Police have found the bacteria, botulinum

bacillus that could be used in germ warfare at the commune, which is already suspected of having produced the nerve gas sarin used in last Monday's Tokyo subway gas attack (AFP photo).

area believed to be a laboratory, said they had impounded several sophisticated chemical and medical devices from the Mt. Fuji complex.

Police confiscated an advanced DNA device and 200 large containers of peptone, a solution used to cultivate bacteria and other microorganisms.

"So far we have found no chemical machinery or other items linked to the manufacture of biological weaponry," said a police spokesman, quoting Masahiro Terao, head of the Metropolitan Police Department's murder squad.

A high-ranking investigation source said the seized items could be used to make bacteriological weapons, but there was no evidence that the cult had actually been doing so.

The Yomiuri Shimbun said police had determined that a man still in hospital after

exposure to the nerve gas was a prime suspect in the case. He was seen leaving a packet from which sarin fumes seeped out inside a train, the newspaper said.

In Moscow, the daily Izvestia said Tuesday a close aide to Russia's President Boris Yeltsin was among several senior officials who helped the Japanese Aum Supreme Truth sect to establish itself in Russia.

The paper said Oleg Lobov who is close to Mr. Yeltsin and is now secretary of Russia's powerful Security Council had intervened on behalf of the sect and its guru Shoko Asahara at the end of 1991.

At the time, Mr. Lobov was looking for cash to finance a Russian-Japanese university in Moscow. Izvestia said that about this time, Mr. Lobov contacted the Japanese embassy asking it to help arrange a meeting for him with Mr. Asahara.

Instead, the bearded Asahara has claimed he and his followers were the target of sarin attacks by the U.S. military, and said the chemicals found inside the sect buildings were used to make pottery and plastic goods.

Mr. Asahara has preached that the world will come to an

Bosnian army, Serbs battle on, ignoring pleas to halt

SARAJEVO (R) — The Bosnian army and Serb forces battled on through wintry weather Tuesday, ignoring international and U.N. pleas for a halt in the combat.

"It is our understanding both parties continue to opt for the military option," said U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivankovic.

He told reporters in Sarajevo that both sides were refusing to meet and were setting numerous pre-conditions for attending talks with the United Nations on rescuing a four-month ceasefire blown apart by last week's Bosnian army offensive.

The United Nations says the eight-day offensive has won the Bosnian army ground in the Majevica hills to the east of Tuzla and on Vlasic Mountain, which towers above the central Bosnian town of Travnik, a government stronghold.

Swedish peacekeepers reported artillery duels between Bosnian Serb and government forces Tuesday in

the Majevica region as both sides battled across snowy ground to secure control of a key communication facility.

Muslim forces say they have surrounded the Stolice Relay Station, which controls telephone traffic and television signals across much of the north of the country, and hope to persuade its Serb garrison to surrender the facility intact.

The Bosnian Serb News Agency (SRNA) said Serb soldiers had strengthened their positions in the Majevica area and telephone and television links running through Stolice had been repaired.

Fighting also continued on the Vlasic Plateau, the United Nations said, although restrictions on the movement of peacekeepers limited their ability to report on battlefield gains and losses, officials added.

A chorus of international calls for a halt to the fighting has gone unheeded.

The five-nation "contact group," struggling to find a diplomatic solution to the

Moscow.

The Western powers are reluctant to end sanctions on Belgrade quickly, fearing they will lose the only tool they have to lever Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic into pressuring Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia to agree to peace.

Shrugging off pleas to order a halt to the fighting, Bosnia's President Alija Izetbegovic said Monday Belgrade must recognise his country and the Bosnian Serbs must accept the contact group peace plan before peace talks can restart.

His government argues it must fight to regain some of the 70 per cent of Bosnia held by the Serbs since the international community will not force the Serbs to give up the land.

The Bosnian Serbs have refused to even discuss the contact group peace plan under which they stand to lose around a third of the territory they now hold. The Serbs made up about 30 per cent of Bosnia's pre-war population.

New Russian faction hots up pre-election battle

MOSCOW (R) — A new parliamentary faction set out goals similar to Russian President Boris Yeltsin's Tuesday, heating up a battle which is emerging for the central political ground ahead of elections.

"The country needs stability. Everything has got mixed up — empty promises, a lack of responsibility, aggressiveness and ideological emptiness... we need a great, stable Russia."

The 37-member Stability Faction, holding its first news conference, identified its main aims as strengthening the state, improving law and order, raising living standards and stabilising the economy. All are policies promoted by Mr. Yeltsin.

The group made clear it would seek to win over moderate and pro-reform voters in December's election to the State Duma, the lower house, signalling a challenge to two other newly-created groups and the established centrist parties.

"Under the conditions, the president had to resort to unpopular measures," Stability member Viktor Mironov said.

Stability's leaders did not say who they would back in presidential elections next year. But their policies indicated Mr. Yeltsin was a possible candidate, although he has not said yet if he will run.

U.N. conference opens with climate warnings

BERLIN (R) — The United Nations Tuesday opened an 11-day international conference intended to find ways to combat global warming and avert potentially catastrophic changes in the climate.

The Berlin conference, with more than 1,000 delegates from at least 128 countries, is a follow-up to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and hopes to establish a basis for cutting man-made emissions into the next century.

"The peoples (of the world) expect us to take the decisions necessary to protect them from the harm that threatens," German Environment Minister Angela Merkel, elected conference president, told the opening session.

"We carry responsibility not only for today's generation but also for those of the future," she said.

Ms. Merkel cautioned against waiting for science to abolish remaining doubts about the effects of global warming.

The U.N.'s own intergovernmental panel on climate change has forecast a dramatic rise of between 1.5 and three degrees centigrade in the Earth's surface temperature next century if mushrooming industrial emissions are not cut.

"If we don't take action, we must expect grave and irreversible consequences a rise in sea levels, a shift in climate and vegetation zones and a deterioration in food production and the world's nutrition situation are only a few examples," Ms. Merkel said.

"If we wait until observable climate changes have begun, we will be stuck with them for decades... if we are serious about long-term change we will not be able to avoid radical changes in our pattern of consumption and production and in our life-style."

Some of the former fear their emerging industry will be throttled by anti-pollution measures.

Foreigners flee Burundi capital

BUJUMBURA (AFP) — Some 200 foreigners, mostly women and children, flew out of Bujumbura Tuesday for "holidays" abroad after a week of fighting between Hutus and Tutsis in the Burundian capital that saw up to 500 killed.

Many of the children were crying as they boarded the Air France chartered flight and adults said they were "heartbreak" at the thought of not being able to return.

Among those fleeing were 155 women and children from the 500-strong French com-

munity in this tiny central African nation. Their one-way tickets were paid for by the French government, but French Cooperation Minister Bernard Debre, who was at the airport, maintained:

"There is no evacuation. The men are staying. There are women and children leaving on holiday. Can you imagine that we'd tell them: 'Yes, there's a bit of trouble in Bujumbura; go for a walk in the streets'?"

Nationals of Belgium, which has some 900 expatriates here, the United States,

Canada-EU fish war of words lurches towards armed confrontation

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Talks aimed at resolving the fish war between the EU and Canada resumed here Tuesday, but the risk of an armed confrontation on the high seas grew with Spain authorising its warships to use "all means" to protect its trawlers in the North Atlantic.

Spain already has one patrol boat, the Vigia, in the international waters off Newfoundland where the Pescavaro 1 had its net cut by Canadian Coast Guards Sunday and another trawler, the Estai, was seized on March 9.

A second patrol boat, the Serviola, is headed for the area. Defence Minister Juan Garcia Vargas said the boats had been ordered to "prevent a new seizure by all means," even "at the risk of collision and a threat of boarding."

"It would be regrettable if an accident were to happen because of the bragging of the Canadian fishing minister," Mr. Garcia Vargas said.

The European Union (EU) broke off talks late Monday in protest at the net-cutting, which fishing commissioner Emma Bonino denounced as an act of piracy.

But with a majority of member states unwilling to impose multilateral trade sanctions, the EU has little option but to try to negotiate a settlement to the dispute over rights to trawling stocks of Greenland halibut.

The talks took place at the level of senior officials with the EU represented by the European Commission and Canada's delegation headed by Ambassador Jacques Roy.

An announcement that Spain was reintroducing visas for visiting Canadians appeared in Tuesday's official gazette. The step will have limited impact since any Canadian who wants to visit Spain without a visa could do

so by passing through another member of the passport-free Schengen zone.

Canada has accused the Estai of using an illegal fine-mesh net which meant four-fifths of its catch was undersized. Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin was due to display the net in New York later Tuesday.

Sunday's net-cutting came after Spanish trawlers resumed fishing in an area known as the nose of the Newfoundland Grand Banks, just outside Canadian waters, for the first time since the Estai's seizure.

The Commission insists they have every right to go on fishing there. Canada insists it will enforce a unilaterally-declared moratorium of fishing for Greenland halibut, whose stocks straddle the boundary between Canadian and international waters.

"There is no question of trade sanctions," the official, who asked not to be named, said.

The official said the European Commission was expected to give EU ambassadors a list of possible retaliatory actions against Ottawa at a meeting Thursday, but that no action was expected to be taken.

The commission was asked to draw up the list by ambassadors after Canada seized the Spanish fishing vessel Estai in international waters on March 9.

The British official said trade sanctions would be a violation of World Trade Organisation rules. Other EU nations, including Germany, were also opposed to trade sanctions, the official said.

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Prevention better than cure

AT A time when the rich nations find it necessary to cut down social services due to budgetary constraints, the poor countries are coming under increased pressure from their peoples to seek and develop new revenues to provide non-existent services. What stands out most in this context is the medical bill that countries have to bear. In the industrial world national medical insurance has almost become a basic right. But due to the increasing cost of health programmes, many developed states are now turning to preventive medicine as an effective means to cut the price tag on medical expenses. Preventive medicine is surely less expensive than treatment. If peoples were told how to lead a healthy life and how to protect their environment, diseases like heart attacks or cancer could be greatly diminished and in the process the cost to the national economy would likewise decrease. Informing people about what is good or bad for their health cannot be a sporadic exercise. It should take the form of a constant campaign about health hazards ranging from animal fat to secondary smoking. Governments should also do their own homework by preventing pollution of the air and contamination of water and food. The expense of such programmes is minimal in comparison with the costs of medications that could be otherwise incurred.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Tuesday said His Majesty King Hussein's visit to the U.S. is of special importance. Not only because it follows the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, but because the U.S. shoulders a basic responsibility in protecting the Middle East peace process. The newspaper said in its editorial that American Vice-President Al Gore's affirmation in Amman last week that the U.S. will honour its commitments to the process has revived Jordan's confidence that the U.S. realises the importance of translating its keenness for peace into tangible work that would convince all the involved parties of its feasibility. This also shows those parties that the continuation of the peace process would bring positive changes on people's lives in the region, it said. Mr. Gore's statements paved the way for the success of King Hussein's visit to Washington, it said, adding that the King's talks with President Bill Clinton, senior administration officials and congressmen will also have many positive results. Peace is not only declaring the end of a war, it is also declaring a war against poverty which supports extremism, a war against despair which breeds violence, the newspaper said, noting that peace should not allow its enemies any chance to ruin it. It continued that peace also means securing an honourable life for children and protecting them from the phantoms of war.

AL DUSTOUR daily also dwelt on the same topic in its editorial, saying Jordanian political moves, led by King Hussein, in the international arena have reached their climax by His Majesty's meeting Monday with Mr. Clinton, administration officials and Congress members. The paper said these Jordanian moves which come amid intensified regional and international efforts is extremely important because of Jordan's focal role in the peace process. It said the King's talks with Mr. Clinton dealt with the foundations of peace in the Middle East, namely establishing peace at all Arab-Israeli fronts on the basis of international legitimacy, resolutions and the principle of land for peace. Any achievements made for establishing peace will remain threatened and vulnerable unless they were boosted by other achievements on the other Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese tracks, said the paper. Thus in view of the importance of Jordan's role in the process, this role should be enhanced by having Washington honour its pledges and commitments towards Jordan in economy and defence.

Washington Watch

The problems facing Gingrich

By Dr. James Zogby

ALTHOUGH IT is only half-way through the first 100 days of Republican control of Congress, problems are already beginning to develop. First and foremost among them are the seemingly endless difficulties facing the new Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich — the first Republican to hold that post in 40 years.

Mr. Gingrich enjoyed a meteoric rise to national prominence, which was well-chronicled by the nation's top political reporters. For years, from the beginning of his political career, he sought and worked towards the position he now holds. He worked tirelessly to advance his own personal career and also to help elect a Republican majority which could elect him speaker.

But now, only 50 days after ascending to his coveted leadership role, Mr. Gingrich finds himself as one of the most unpopular politicians in the U.S. At same time, Mr. Gingrich's highly publicised Republican legislative agenda — the vaunted "Contract with America" — has begun to stall after initial successes and the speaker himself is being confronted by a string of charges of unethical behaviour.

When he assumed control of the Congress in January, it appeared that Mr. Gingrich would have smooth sailing. The Republican "contract" had enough votes to win. Republicans were in control, President Bill Clinton was in trouble, and the public was roughly supportive of the Republicans. Mr. Gingrich had a message and a plan, and what looked like the power to implement it.

But the new speaker ran into problems almost immediately: The kind of ethical problems that stem from carelessness and reaching too far and too fast for power.

In an effort to capitalise on his new position and broad public recognition, Mr. Gingrich announced a major book deal. As details became public it turned out that Mr. Gingrich was to be connected with media tycoon Murdoch. Mr. Murdoch, a somewhat controversial media magnate, has a number of sensitive issues currently pending before the government. His meeting with Mr. Gingrich and the \$4.5 million contract with the speaker had all the earmarks of a conflict of interest and a violation of ethical standards.

Interestingly enough, it appears that the Gingrich-Murdoch book deal was similar, in some respects, to the book deal that ended the congressional career of another speaker of the House, Democrat Jim Wright of Texas. Mr. Wright lost his position in 1989, and it is ironic that the challenge and relentless pressure which brought him down came from a young Republican firebrand from Georgia — Newt Gingrich.

A number of other controversies have erupted in the face of the speaker. In January, his appointment to be the new House historian (a position responsible for maintaining the historical records of the Congress) came under fire for her controversial historical views, and the speaker quickly fired her. Mr. Gingrich's dealings with GOPAC, the political action committee he founded to help elect Republican members of Congress, were the cause of another ethics complaint. According to the complaint, Mr. Gingrich was given approval to teach a college course on the condition that it be non-partisan, but GOPAC helped to fund the course by recruiting 200,000 conservative Republican donors through bitterly partisan attacks on the president. Mr. Gingrich has also been accused of lobbying for the benefit of companies which have made large contributions to GOPAC.

In general, Mr. Gingrich is facing a number of complaints stemming from his use of his congressional staff for

personal and political efforts, which is a violation of House rules. His district office staff used government equipment on government time to help produce a book Mr. Gingrich wrote in 1984, and also worked on material for his college course. Mr. Gingrich also stands accused of using his position to get his wife a job representing an Israeli firm which paid extremely well for little work — another example of Mr. Gingrich using his high position to get "sweetheart" deals.

In short, the very excesses and abuses of power which Mr. Gingrich railed against so hard and so long while the Democrats ran the House are now the charges facing him after only 50 days in office. This hasn't helped the image of the Republican Party, which bills itself as the party of reform, since, Gingrich's troubles are so well-known and he is one of the people most closely identified with the party in the public eye. It is ironic on both counts that Mr. Gingrich defends himself by arguing that his "behaviour is no different than most other members (of the House)."

As a result of this steady stream of negative stories and also, some suggest, Mr. Gingrich's abrasive personal style, the speaker's ratings have fallen to extremely low levels. Back in January, Mr. Gingrich enjoyed a 34 per cent-37 per cent unfavourable rating; but today that rating has fallen to 33 per cent and 47 unfavourable.

At the same time, the Republican "contract" agenda is also suffering. The early sections of the "contract" that came to a vote before the Congress passed easily, in part because they were easy issues and not controversial with the public. Issues like applying the same laws to Congress, which apply to all other passers, ending "unfunded mandates" the process of passing laws requiring the states to take actions without giving them the money to pay for them, cutting congressional staff and committees, opening committee meetings to the public and similar measures passed easily and with little opposition. Mr. Gingrich appeared strong and the Republicans unstoppable.

But the first significant vote on a controversial issue came last month with the fight over the balanced budget amendment. While the amendment easily won the two-thirds majority it needed in the House, Mr. Gingrich's claim that 70 per cent of the voters agreed with the amendment could not win enough Senators for a two-thirds majority in that body and the amendment died. Now there is a fight over "term limits" (limiting the number of terms a member of Congress can serve), with many Republican arguing against the measure or for a version much weaker than proposed in the "contract." This has made Mr. Gingrich appear weak and less in command than he had seemed in January, and has not played well with many in the public who found term limits to be one of the most attractive items in the "contract."

Now the Republicans are attempting to tackle budget cuts, and they must achieve significant reductions in government spending before they can deliver the tax break they promised voters in November. But, as Republicans and the public are learning, it is one thing to talk about cutting the budget and quite another matter to do it. Since the Republicans cannot cut the largest item in the budget — interest on the debt — and since they will not cut the second largest item in the budget — defence — and since they insist on providing a tax break without increasing the deficit, the only area of the budget they can cut from is social programmes.

As the public begins to become aware of the extent of the proposed cuts and the people who would be affected by

them, pressure not to make those cuts is building. The programme which the Republicans are willing to cut, including welfare, aid to farmers, aid to families with dependent children, the federal school lunch programme are supported by almost 70 per cent or more of American voters. Because of the pressure to keep these programmes, 102 Republican members of Congress have told the speaker they will not support the proposed cuts in these programmes.

Problems also loom for most of the other major elements of the "contract." Welfare reform is running into problems as the details emerge about who will be affected by various cuts. While both the House and Senate have passed versions of the line-item veto (which would allow the president to veto individual provisions of a spending bill while signing the rest into law), they must agree on and pass the same version before that provision can take effect, and there are serious doubts that such an agreement can be reached. And until some major spending cuts are agreed to, the tax cuts promised last November will not emerge unless the Republicans break their other promise of reducing the budget deficit.

Even worse for Mr. Gingrich and the Republicans, the Democrats have finally succeeded in regaining the image as the party of the middle class, something they have not really enjoyed since 1964. A recent poll showed that by a margin of 52 per cent-38 per cent Americans think that President Clinton is doing a better job of fighting for the middle class than the Republican Congress. Mr. Clinton himself enjoys an approval rating of 52 per cent, while the same 52 per cent agree that "the more I hear about what the Republicans do in Congress, the less I like it." Mr. Gingrich, the highest-profile Republican in the country, is declining in the polls just as Mr. Clinton, the leading Democrat, is rising.

But while Mr. Gingrich and the Republicans are facing some serious difficulties, so are the Democrats. Former secretary of agriculture Mike Espy was forced to resign from the Clinton cabinet for serious ethics violations. Two other members of the Clinton cabinet, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros and Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, are currently facing serious ethics charges and there are rumours that either one or both of them may be eventually forced to resign.

Yet the president himself seems to be emerging relatively unscathed from investigations into his conduct. While the Republican leadership in the Senate and House will do what they can to bring the Whitewater scandal into the news, the independent Special Counsel which has investigated the matter has not found anything with which to charge the Clinton.

So, at the half-way point through the Republican Congress' first 100 days, what had appeared to be a jigger of change led by Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich no longer seems so mighty, and the ethical troubles facing the speaker are hurting the Republican theme of change from "business as usual." In fact, the "revolutionary" first 100 days of the Republican Congress are becoming little more than a normal congressional session. Newt Gingrich is losing the luster he'd gained by rising so far and so fast to the point that he seems little more than a normal politician — albeit one with unusually high negative ratings. He will need now to show the ability to bounce back, as Mr. Clinton has, if he is to enjoy the kind of successful tenure as speaker which seemed to likely in the first few heady days.

M. KAHIL



Ghosts of atrocities return to haunt Latin America

By Michael Stott

Reuter

BOGOTA — Remember the Latin America of torture, disappearances and death squads?

Those who thought democracy had swept away the cobwebs of past dictatorships have had some rude reminders recently that Latin America is still haunted by the ghosts of its authoritarian past.

Brazilian military police this month executed a robbery suspect in broad daylight. Petty thief Cristiano Melo was wrestled to the ground by officers near a smart Rio de Janeiro shopping centre, dragged behind a van and shot dead.

Had television cameras not recorded it, Mr. Melo's death would have passed unnoticed. Instead, the killing was flashed across screens around the world, becoming to some a symbol of how today's democratic Latin America remains hostage to yesterday's repression.

Academics and human rights watchers say the democratic governments installed across the continent in the past decade have done little to change a tradition of brutality by those in authority that goes back beyond the Spanish conquest to the Inca and Aztec empires.

"It is not very optimistic about the future of democracy in Latin America," said Roderic Camp, a professor at Tulane University in the United States who studies in the region. "Electoral reform and cleaner elections don't change essential ingredients of culture or society."

Those who live and work at the front line, such as Caio Ferraz, a sociologist born and bred in one of Rio's toughest slums, are blunter still. "Brazil is a democracy only because the

law says we are," Mr. Ferraz said. "Between the law and reality there is a vacuum that stretches all the way to the moon."

The government in Argentina, where some 14,000 people died or disappeared at the hands of security forces during the 1970s, prefers these days to talk about an economic miracle which has given it some of the world's fastest growth in the last four years.

But Adolfo Francisco Scilingo, a retired naval officer, brought a different past to life this month when he recounted to a newspaper how thousands of political prisoners were stripped naked and thrown alive from aircraft over the Atlantic Ocean by the military.

Driven by what he said was a need to confess, Mr. Scilingo described how the prisoners, many so weak from torture they had to be helped aboard the aircraft, were injected with sedatives by a navy doctor, undressed, and thrown into the ocean thousands of feet below.

President Carlos Menem reacted by branding Mr. Scilingo a criminal and stripping him of his rank.

Martin Abregu, a lawyer who is one of Argentina's most respected human rights experts, believes Latin American nations have done little to stop future rights abuses.

"You still have a weak judiciary, brutal police, politicians who prefer not to touch the subject," he said.

Across the Andes in Peru, Diego Garcia-Sayan, executive director of the Andean Commission of Jurists, echoed that view.

"I think what we are seeing is that democracy and elected regimes are not necessarily synonymous," he said. "What is also needed is an efficient and effective system of justice and protection of citizens."

Differences dog U.S.-Russian ties before summit

By Timothy Heritage

Renter

MOSCOW — Six weeks before U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian leader Boris Yeltsin meet for a summit, hopes that they can warm up chilly U.S.-Russian relations are dogged by a failure to resolve a number of key disputes.

The Kremlin breathed a sigh of relief when, after weeks of prostration, Mr. Clinton agreed last week to come to Moscow on May 9 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the allied victory over Nazi Germany in World War II and attend the summit.

But the strains in U.S.-Russian relations were highlighted last Thursday, when talks between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in Geneva made new headway on the most important issues.

These include the eastward expansion of NATO.

which Russia opposes, differences over how to solve the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, U.S. criticism of Russia's intervention in Chechnya and of Moscow's plans to sell nuclear technology to Iran.

"The simple fact that President Clinton took so long to decide to come to the summit indicates doubts on the future of the Russian-American relationship," Viktor Kremenyuk, deputy director of Moscow's USA and Canada Institute, said.

"But the fact that he agreed to come shows that the two sides recognise the need to talk, even though relations are not very cordial. The fact that they are meeting at all may be more important than what is on the agenda," he told Reuters.

In Geneva, Mr. Kozyrev acknowledged relations between Washington and Russia had sunk after the euphoric period immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of

the 1991 and Mr. Yeltsin's emergence as the key figure in Moscow.

"I would say that indeed the honeymoon has come to an end," Mr. Kozyrev told reporters.

But he said relations were now marked by a practical approach. "The sobering-up period in the wake of the honeymoon ended not in divorce but in a growing ability to resolve jointly problems that we face," he said.

Mr. Clinton had been considering whether or not to come to Russia because of fears that his visit could be interpreted as indirect acceptance of Kremlin policies such as the military campaign to crush independence moves in Chechnya.

"It is good that Clinton has decided to come for the summit and shown the need for dialogue, even if there are doubts about the relationship and what the summit can achieve," he said.

Any further cooling in relations would involve huge risks.

He said any deterioration in relations could, in the worst scenario, hold up or torpedo agreements and negotiations in important areas, including arms reduction.

Some commentators fear that some of the mutual

distrust has reemerged from the cold war era in some quarters of both Washington and Moscow, particularly since the Republican Party's success in elections to the U.S. Congress last year.

"There are people on

both sides painting the picture of an evil empire, which does not augur well for the future," said Michael McFaull, senior associate at the Moscow office of the independent Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"It is good that Clinton has decided to come for the summit and shown the need for dialogue, even if there are doubts about the relationship and what the summit can achieve," he said.

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"There are people on

Features



Koranic healing popular in Gaza

By Donna Abu Nasr
The Associated Press

AZA CITY, Gaza Strip — The smell of incense wafted through the clinic as a gaunt clergymen pushed a knee into the stomach of a patient squirming on a green velvet blanket.

The healer whipped the man's sides and feet with a stick and recited verses from the Koran.

"There is no God but Allah. In the name of Allah, give him, you jinn," hissed Sheikh Ramadan Saifi as he tried to exorcise the evil spirit he said had possessed the mentally ill 45-year-old man for eight years.

Mr. Saifi runs one of about dozen Koranic clinics that have sprung up in the Gaza Strip recently in another sign of the religious spirit taking root among Palestinians.

During the Israeli occupation, many healers operated on the run for fear they could be targeted by the Israeli as Islamic zealots. Many do support the Muslim fundamentalist movement, but insist they operate independently from the group.

Since Yasser Arafat took over local government for the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in May, many healers have opened clinics. Authorities have not tried to close them, despite complaints by the Islamic religious establishment that the healers are charlatans and should be prosecuted.

"We can't interfere in people's beliefs," said Marwan Karanfani, an Arafat spokesman. "Even in the United States you find people who believe in the healing powers of religion."

Koranic healing, especially exorcism of evil spirits, is practised elsewhere in the Arab World, including in neighbouring Egypt. Healers whip patients to beat the jinns out of them. They say if a patient squirms or whimpers, it is the jinn reacting to the pain and not the patient.

Gaza's healers treat patients suffering from a variety of illnesses, including skin diseases, ulcers, infertility and migraines.

They hand out leaflets with verses from the Koran to be read by the patient or relatives. They also dispense honey, olive oil for a body rub and a drink made of saffron and turmeric.

The clerics say the Prophet Mohammad used the same

treatment to cure his followers more than 1,400 years ago.

Dr. Mahmoud Zahar, a surgeon and leading Hamas activist, said the existence of jinns is a basic Muslim belief and illnesses caused by the evil spirits can be cured by the Koran. He cited verse 55 from Surat Al Rahman: "And the jinn did he create of smokeless fire."

Dr. Zahar said jinns are responsible for troubles that in the Western world would be diagnosed as psychosomatic illnesses and neuroses.

Many Muslim clerics dismiss such claims as foolish. Mufti Abdul Karim Kahoul, the Muslim spiritual leader of Gaza City, said the only cure the Koran can offer is healing of the soul. "Have you ever seen a pharmacy that takes prescriptions for Koranic verses?" he asked sarcastically.

Mr. Kahoul said the healers exploit Islam for personal gain. "They are charlatans and heretics."

Mr. Saifi and a colleague, Sheikh Issa Daour, dismissed the mufti's criticism, citing verse 82 of the Koran's Surat Al Isra: "And we reveal of the Koran that which is a healing and a mercy for believers..."

They said that it was up to their patients how much they wanted to pay and that the poor were treated for free.

A cardboard box attached to a wall in their two-room clinic carries a sign reading: "Please don't forget to pay."

The clinic is furnished with a bed, a few plastic chairs, a stereo set, halogen recordings from the Koran and headphones for the patients.

The healers do not advertise directly, but patients often take out space in local newspapers to make their gratitude public.

Mr. Saifi and Mr. Daour proudly pointed to a bulletin board outside their clinic plastered with messages from patients they said were cured of diabetes, sterility and ulcers.

Mr. Saifi was less successful with the exorcism he attempted that day. "But although he failed to evict the evil spirit, he said he was able to communicate with him.

The patient writhed as Mr. Saifi asked the jinn who he was.

"I'm Pakistani. My name is Awatef," came back the reply. Mr. Saifi said it came from the jinn, although it sounded like the patient's voice.

By Alistair Lyon
Reporter

KARACHI — Sweating and angry, a retired engineer brushes away glass from his shattered windscreen on the edge of Karachi's troubled Faisal Colony area.

"Three young men with scarves round their faces came from some hideout and I told the driver to stop the car," he says. "They started beating the driver and breaking the glass."

Petty harassment is just one more risk for the 12 million people who live in Pakistan's volatile southern port city.

Once Karachi was a relaxed, vibrant commercial hub, where people strolled the seafront at night and made money by day. Now gunfire crackles after dark and the city has become a flashpoint for ethnic, sectarian and drug-related violence.

The engineer, who gave his name as Haji Khan, believes the vandals were from the ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) or the splinter MQM-Haqiqi faction, but does not know which.

Haji Khan carries no weapon. "Sometimes the police search and whatever explanation I give them, that this is for my own safety, they will say no, you are one of 'them,'" he explains.

"If I had had a gun I would have shot them. God is great and if He calls me I will go."

Inside Faisal Colony, a shabby huddle of breeze-block houses with corrugated iron roofs, shops are shuttered on the normally busy main street. Women glance nervously up alleyways as they shepherd children home from one of the few schools open.

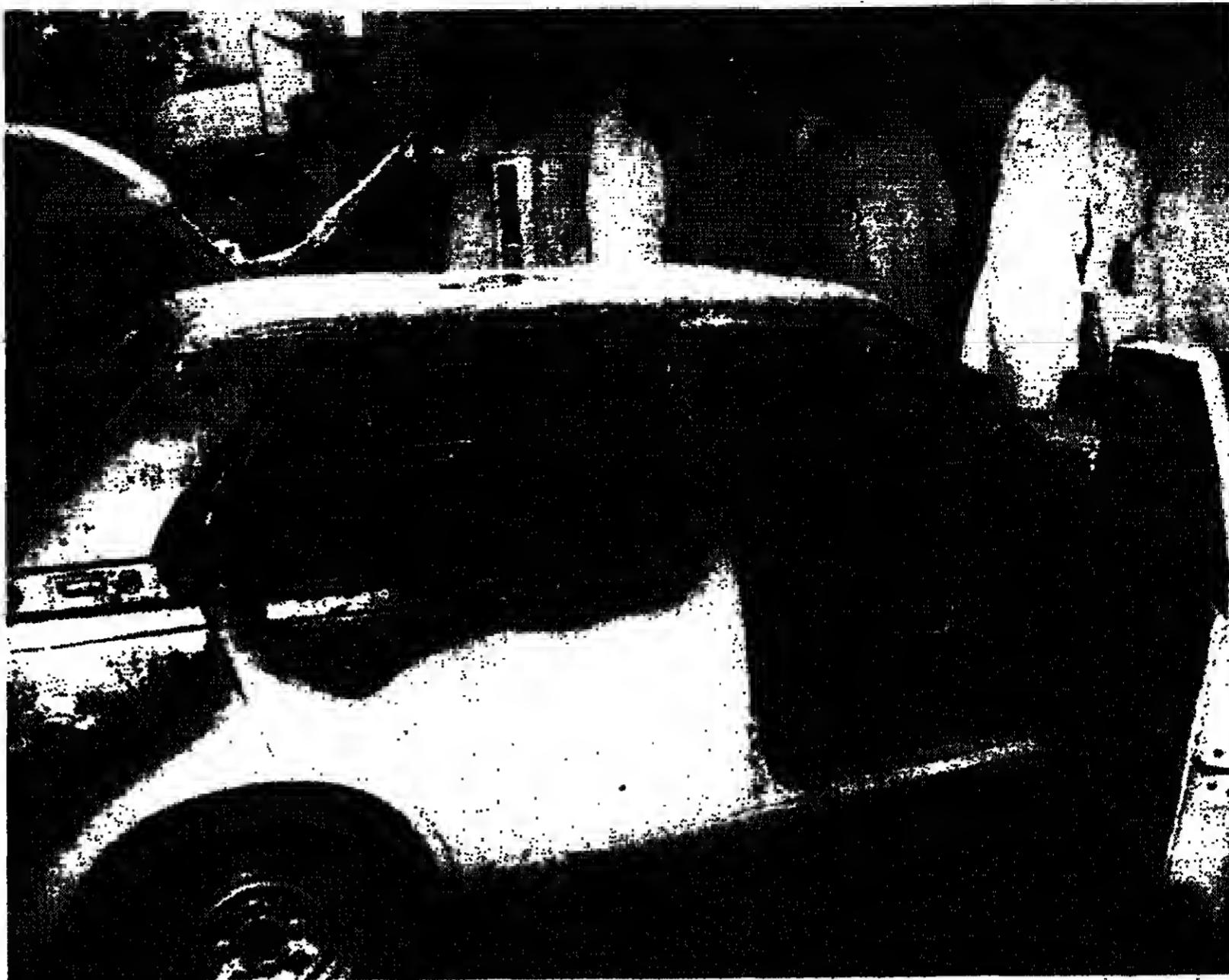
"This is the third day we haven't been able to sell anything," says Ifthikhar, a vegetable vendor at a corner stall.

"People started firing in the area, we don't know who. Four people were wounded two days ago and two yesterday," he says.

A blue armoured police car drives slowly down the dusty street, watched by wary residents.

"Everyone is suffering, afraid to leave their homes. The government has all the power," says Mustafa, a bearded man in his 20s, gesturing at the patrol.

"But what are they doing?" One answer comes a few



People gather around the car that was used in a bomb attack March 10 in front of a Shiite Muslim mosque. At least 10 people have been killed and several injured in the powerful explosion (AFP photo)

Fear pervades daily life in Karachi

hold "suspects" rounded up at random until their families pay a ransom.

By the standards of Karachi, where 340 people, including two U.S. consulate staffers, have died this year, this is not a very bloody day, with no big clashes or killings reported.

Yet the fear and tension in Faisal Colony shows how shadowy gunmen and crude police tactics can paralyse normal life in this and many other districts of Pakistan's biggest city.

"People are not putting up new industries in the Karachi area. Many people have closed their shops. A few might have left Karachi. People are afraid to invest their money."

In despair, leading businessmen called a strike on Saturday to try to persuade Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to act more vigorously to control the rampant lawlessness.

Pakistan authorities on Saturday night hit back at strike leaders, removing Mr. Muneer and three FPCCI vice-presidents from

their positions because of their role in leading the stoppage.

The strike, which brought business activity to a standstill in Karachi and reduced it in the big cities of Lahore and Rawalpindi, was denounced by Ms. Bhutto's government as politically motivated.

"People in Karachi are angry, yes, they have been angry since 1981 against every government," she told Reuters in a recent interview at her home in the city.

Ms. Bhutto blames the violence on ethnic groups such as the MQM, militant Sufi and Shiite Muslim factions, and drug gangs — all armed with guns diverted to Karachi during

the guerrilla war against Soviet troops in neighbouring Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The prime minister also says the people of Karachi have not done enough to curb the mayhem in their midst.

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Officials say U.S. dependence on oil imports endangers national security

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States' growing dependence on oil imports threatens national security, senior officials said Monday, but they rejected calls to limit imports or take new measures to boost domestic output.

Senate foreign relations committee chairman Jesse Helms, a Republican, urged the Democrat administration to change its policy to reduce U.S. dependence on oil from "potentially hostile foreign countries" in the Middle East.

Petroleum imports threaten to impair national security because of the growing reliance of our economy on imported oil from a politically volatile region of the world," under secretary of commerce for export administration William Reinsch said.

But setting import restrictions would only hamper the U.S. economy, and the government believes that its "ongoing efforts to increase production and promote energy conservation and efficiency represent the best means to limit U.S. reliance on foreign oil," Mr. Reinsch said.

Mr. Helms argued, however,

that "our policies in this area are placing Americans at a dangerous economic and security risk."

Imports accounted for more than half U.S. oil consumption last year for the first time, edging up to 50.4 per cent of the total, while U.S. oil production fell to 6.62 million barrels a day, the lowest level in 40 years.

If the current trend continues, Mr. Helms said, "the United States will depend on foreign countries to provide

two-thirds of U.S. oil needs by 2005, twice the level of 20 years earlier."

Former energy secretary Donald Hodel warned meanwhile that "the world is on the brink of another oil shock" because of the failure of the U.S. government to react to the deteriorating political situation in Saudi Arabia.

He said Saudi Arabia could deteriorate into civil war after the death of the aging King Fahd, and raised the spectre of Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil supplier, using its power to disrupt world markets.

The United States has carried out a year-long study on the oil import question after the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) asked for action on the issue, citing a law empowering the government

to take action if imports pose a threat to national security.

But the study concluded in a report sent to President Bill Clinton last month that curbing imports was not the answer.

"The costs of import restrictions would have a negative effect on our economy and would not correct some of the major reasons for our increasing dependence on foreign oil," Mr. Reinsch said.

Joshua Gotbaum, assistant secretary of defence for economic security, stressed that the United States was a lot less dependent on imports than its European and Japanese allies.

He added that the Pentagon was satisfied it could meet its oil needs even if it had to carry out two regional military operations at one time.

But he stressed that Washington was well aware that Iraq and Iran "both pose direct military threats to the Gulf region" and said the U.S. Defence Department "is prepared to prevent potential military adversaries from interfering with the global flow of oil."

The IPAA is urging Congress to take action to boost the U.S. domestic oil industry, which has lost 57,100 jobs in the past five years.

Assistant energy secretary for policy Susan Tierney urged the Republican Congress to abandon planned budget cuts to the domestic industry, notably spending for research into new technology to find an extract oil.

She said the government will be sending proposals for financial and other incentives for the industry to the White House in the next week.

IMF burns midnight oil on new crisis rescue fund

PARIS (AFP) — The IMF has given itself one more month to complete a plan for a rescue fund to ensure that cash is available for any new crisis along the lines of the Mexican devaluation, monetary sources have said.

The plan is expected to be part of a package of measures proposed by the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Michel Camdessus, to strengthen the fund's capacity to cope with the strains of a changing environment.

Assistant energy secretary for policy Susan Tierney urged the Republican Congress to abandon planned budget cuts to the domestic industry, notably spending for research into new technology to find an extract oil.

The plan was likely to be ready in time for the spring meeting of the interim committee, the IMF's top policy-making body.

The sources said that staff were trying to put together a "credible" package for discussion by the 24-member ministerial committee scheduled to meet in Washington on April 26, but were still working on the details.

The Paris-based International Herald Tribune (IHT) quoted Mr. Camdessus as saying he planned to propose distributing 16 billion Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) (about \$24 billion) to the poorest IMF members and 38 other countries, including the ex-Soviet republics.

Mr. Camdessus was reported as saying that his proposal also involved setting aside an additional 20 billion SDRs (\$30 billion) aside for a special fund intended as a safety net to be drawn upon if IMF members were to face another financial emergency like the one which hit Mexico at the end of December.

The IMF mobilised about \$18 billion last January as part of a rescue for Mexico amounting to about \$51 billion.

Mr. Camdessus has also said that the fund was considering ways of providing an "early warning" system to detect potential problems in countries' financial and monetary management before they reach crisis proportions.

Other components of the package, according to Mr. Camdessus, might include a further increase in IMF quotas — the shares in the fund's capital subscribed by member countries and based on criteria reflecting their relative weight in the world economy.

Mr. Camdessus' call for an allocation of 36 billion SDRs (\$54 billion), a one-year extension of its systemic transformation facility (STF) set up two years ago to help countries in transition make the first steps on the road towards reform, and a widening of the limits for access to IMF resources for all members in need of balance of payments support.

Mr. Camdessus' call for an allocation of 36 billion SDRs was blocked by the G-7 countries which instead opted for a British-American proposal for a much more limited allocation. This in turn was blocked by developing nations.

Israel could be among most developed nations — chief economist

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's chief economist said Tuesday that the Jewish state could become one of the world's most developed nations if the government accelerated economic reforms.

Bank of Israel Director Yaakov Frenkel, presenting the central bank's annual report at a news conference, said the economy was "comfortably situated" to continue growing at an annual rate of around five per cent.

"The Israeli economy stands before a golden opportunity to take a path towards a high ranking among the developed nations," he said. "The potential for growth is high."

The 400-page report summarised 1994 data published recently by the Central Statistics Bureau which Mr. Frenkel said reflected an overall positive economic performance:

dangered by relatively high inflation, which was 14.5 per cent, and four per cent per capita.

Industrial output grew 7.6 per cent.

Exports grew 10.8 per cent.

Unemployment fell from 10 per cent to 7.8 per cent, despite a continuing immigration wave that brought more than 600,000 newcomers, most from the former Soviet Union, since 1990.

Real wages rose 10 per cent, with the average monthly salary around 3,900 shekels, or \$1,300. Annual per capita income is about \$14,000, on par with some countries in western Europe.

The statistics reflected a continuing economic boom partly attributed to widening markets as a decades-old Arab boycott eases, and the country's emergence as a major hi-tech exporter.

But Mr. Frenkel noted that long-term growth was en-

dangered by the six per cent rise in private consumption and relatively low savings rate of 18 per cent of disposable income.

Productivity has remained stagnant for several years, primarily because of a high number of immigrants requiring retraining, he said.

Mr. Frenkel praised the government for recent decisions to cut taxes and spending by 1.2 billion shekels (\$400 million) each and hand out to citizens options for the purchase of \$2 billion in stocks of state-owned companies.

The high interest rates and declining profits are among the reasons cited for a collapse of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, which lost nearly 40 per cent of its paper value during 1994.

The market's Mishnah index rose 1.4 per cent Tuesday to 163.2.

continue opening up the economy...will increase the stability necessary for growth," he said.

Mr. Frenkel said that despite relatively low inflation in the last three months, he would continue tight monetary policies. The central bank's interest rate is now 14.8 per cent.

He also said he opposed devaluing the shekel, long holding at about three to the U.S. dollar, despite domestic price rises. The stable exchange rate combined with the increasing costs are undercutting exporters' profits.

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IEA sees need for cooperation on energy security

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Six countries could be called on to meet more than half of global oil demand by 2010, raising concerns about vulnerability of importers to any supply crisis, an International Energy Agency (IEA) official said Tuesday.

The IEA recently projected the world would use an average 69.2 million barrels daily this year, a million up on last year when global oil demand was its highest for five years.

The projected growth in import dependency raised concerns about "vulnerability

to economic dislocation in the event of a supply disruption," Mr. Ferriter said.

He said any number of events could again shake world oil markets and suggested an effective emergency response measure was to hold stocks.

IEA member countries had agreed to hold emergency stocks equivalent to at least 90 days of net imports, he said, adding that they presently hold about 175 days of stocks.

But, should they decide to

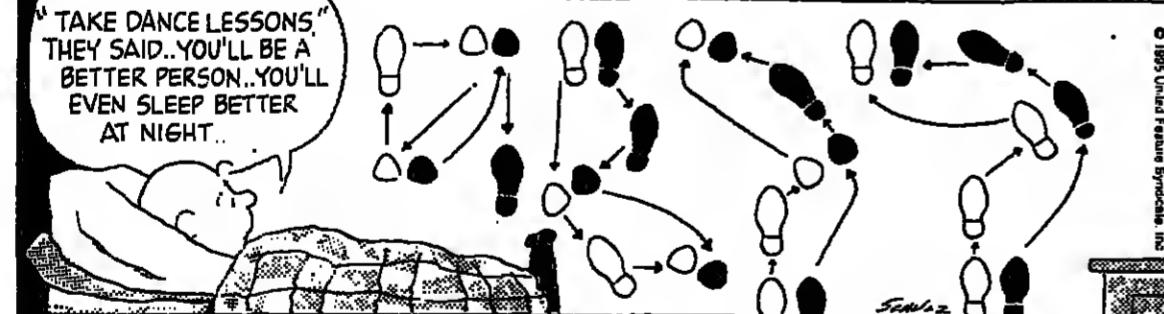
maintain the same ratio of stocks to imports in the future as they now do, they would need to increase stocks by some 40 per cent by the year 2010.

In addition, the projected lower share of IEA countries in world oil consumption will put an extra burden on them in times of oil crisis, since non-OECD countries with burgeoning oil demand may not be adequately equipped in terms of stockholding to deal with a supply disruption," Mr. Ferriter said.

While bilateral trade remains comparatively small, Mr. Garret said increased U.S. interest in India has been demonstrated by the

IEA estimates show that

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



U.S. targets India in Asia trade strategy

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. administration is pursuing a policy of increasing trade and cooperation with the rapidly growing economies of South Asia, particularly India, lawmakers were told.

"India is one of the world's most important big emerging markets," said Jeffrey Garten, under secretary of commerce for international trade. "There are tremendous opportunities for the United States there."

Mr. Garten said disputes over intellectual property rights and human rights should not undermine the U.S. policy of increasing cooperation with India, whose population is expected to top one billion by the turn of the century.

"The challenge is to deal with all of these (problems) just as we deal with our closest allies, and that is that no one issue undercuts the entire relationship," he said. "It used to be that (emerging markets) were seen as foreign policy problems. Now we want to view them as opportunities for new, mutually beneficial relationships."

Mr. Garten and other officials appearing before a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee said Washington is moving aggressively to improve ties in the region, and that the outlook for India has considerably brightened since economic reforms began in 1991.

White bilateral trade remains comparatively small, Mr. Garret said increased U.S. interest in India has been demonstrated by the

U.S. visit of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and visits to India by several cabinet-level delegations in the last year.

"These are not simply efforts to show the flag," Mr. Garten said. "They are efforts to lay the foundation for a new U.S.-India relationship that immediately and importantly benefits both countries."

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Business & Finance

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Owners of restaurants, patisseries rebel against municipality

** OWNERS OF restaurants and confectionery stores are locked in a dispute with the Municipality of Greater Amman (MGA) over the usage of space in front and around their shops. According to the businessmen, their usage of the front and side yards has been licensed by the MGA many years ago against a fee of JD 5 per square metre which was raised later to JD 30 per square metre. Few months ago, the MGA hiked the fee to JD 70 per square metre for restaurants and confectionery stores in prime areas. In other locations, the fee was hiked either to JD 60 or JD 45 but those businesses which were charged JD 30 were not affected. As the businesses in prime areas, such as Shmeisani and Wasfi Al Tel (Gardens) Street, denounced the higher fees, the MGA reduced the fees from JD 75 to JD 50 per square metre for prime areas and from JD 60 to JD 40 per square metre for second-best locations.

The reduction in fees did not appease the high-street restaurateurs and patisseries owners who still refuse to pay the dues by the March 31, 1995 deadline. They say there is no reason for raising the fees which they cannot pay under the present economic slowdown. Stressing that their front and side yards had beautified the area, the businessmen said the authorities should give them more facilities and encouragement instead of putting additional obstacles to their projects. MGA Mayor Mamoud Abbadi emphasised that sidewalks and front yards belong to pedestrians in the first place and any use of these pavements by businesses was a violation that the MGA will not accept. He emphasised that "we cannot implement the laws and regulations on public restaurants in King Talal Street, Qwaisneh and Wihdat and not be able to implement them on high-style restaurant owners in Shmeisani and Wasfi Al Tel Street. The law must be implemented on everybody."

Dr. Abbadi said the MGA was not seeking profit but rather to end violations and that court will decide in the dispute between the MGA and the businessmen.

Tareq Siraj, owner of strand coffee shop, said no one has the right to use the pavement but the problem is really in the front space and yards around the building. He added: "How can the municipality convince me that I am violating the regulations but if I pay the fees they request I am no longer in violation." He contested Dr. Abbadi's statement that all businesses should be treated equally, noting that a falafel sandwich cost 110 fils everywhere but rents are not the same everywhere" (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

** THE CIVIL Consumer Corporation lowered prices on 170 items at all its 30 branches. The reduction in prices range between 10 to 65 per cent (Al Ra'i).

** ELECTRIC ENERGY generated from Al Rishieh gas field accounts for only 18 per cent of the total electric power needed for the country. (Al Ra'i).

** UNDER AN agreement signed between the Rafia Industrial Company (RIC) and an Iraqi government institution, RIC started exporting four million plastic bags to Baghdad at a cost of \$860,000 (Al Aswaq).

** TO ENCOURAGE using safer and less-polluting cars, the Cabinet decided to exempt general safety and anti-pollution equipment in cars from customs tariffs (Al Aswaq).

Market turmoil slashes income of Arab Gulf investment firm

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Turbulence in world financial markets slashed the earnings of the biggest joint Gulf investment venture by more than half in 1994 despite a growth in overall assets, the company said Tuesday.

The Gulf Investment Corporation (GIC), owned by the governments of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, said it still made cash dividends for shareholders despite the decline in net profits.

Net income plummeted to \$62.5 million in 1994 from \$128.5 million in 1993 and around \$80.5 million in 1992, the Kuwait-based company said in a statement sent to AFP from Riyadh, where the GCC finance ministers approved its 1994 balance sheet Monday.

The ministers, who make up the board of directors, also endorsed a general assembly recommendation for a cash dividend of \$37.5 million compared to as high as \$60 million in 1993, the

statement said.

"Although well below the performance in 1993, the profits were achieved against the backdrop of exceptional turbulence in international markets," said Kuwaiti Finance Minister Naser Al Rodhan, GIC chairman.

"This performance in a difficult operating environment demonstrates the group's diversity of earnings stream and its ability to remain reasonably profitable at all points in the economic cycle, while at the same time supporting economic development and private enterprise in the Gulf region," he added.

The GIC, owned equally by the six GCC states, offers a wide range of financial services in the areas of investment banking, commercial banking and capital markets. It also invests in projects in the region through other firms.

But most of its assets are based abroad, mainly the

West and South East Asia in stocks, bonds and bank deposits.

Bankers estimate total GCC overseas assets at more than \$400 billion, most of which was invested during the oil boom 15 years ago.

A world stock market crash in 1987 inflicted a loss of more than \$25 billion on the six members while their income from overseas investment sharply fluctuated in the following years due to unstable U.S. dollar and interest rates.

West and South East Asia in stocks, bonds and bank deposits.

Mitsubishi, Bank of Tokyo to merge into world's biggest bank

TOKYO (R) — Two of Japan's elite financial institutions, Mitsubishi Bank Ltd and Bank of Tokyo Ltd, said Tuesday they had reached a basic agreement to merge into the world's biggest bank.

The merger would create a formidable financial player and step up pressure on rivals in danger of being left behind, industry analysts said after initial reports — denied by bank spokesmen — joined Japanese financial markets.

"In the last several years, financial markets in the world and Japan have been changing rapidly. Coping with this was a major reason for seeking the merger," Bank of Tokyo (BOT) President Tatsuki Takagaki told a news conference.

Mitsubishi is Japan's third largest commercial bank in terms of deposits and BOT is the 10th largest.

A marriage between the two banks — rumoured for

years — would create the world's biggest bank with assets of over 72 trillion yen (\$808 billion), outstripping currently top-ranking Sakura Bank Ltd, which has assets of over 53 trillion yen (\$595 billion), financial analysts said.

"They're both in pretty good shape, and this would create a formidable bank," said David Threadgold, analyst at Barclays de Zoete Wedd Securities (Japan).

Other analysts echoed that view.

"Mitsubishi has a very strong corporate culture, a very strong domestic franchise, and is backed up by the huge Mitsubishi Group. But internationally, it is not that strong," said Brian Waterhouse, financial analyst at brokerage James Capel in Tokyo.

"BOT is one of the elite international banks but weak domestically, and has been looking around for a domestic base," he added.

Details of the merger have yet to be decided, but Mitsubishi President Tsuneo Wakai said Mitsubishi would like the merger to take place in April 1996 at the latest.

Analysts said the corporate cultures of the two were a good fit. "In terms of culture, background and pedigree they're closer than anyone except IBJ (Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd)," said Akihiko Ogawa, financial analyst at Salomon Brothers Asia.

"Everybody else lives on the other side of the tracks," she added.

Mr. Waterhouse said, however, that there was some question over whether the management of the new bank could successfully bring the two operations together.

"It would be creating a powerhouse at home and a powerhouse internationally, but would the management of that powerhouse be up to it? — it is a question," he said.

BOT is chaired by former Vice Finance Minister Toyoo Goyen, a dapper figure well-known in international financial circles. Its president, Mr. Takagaki, was said to be a keen proponent of the merger.

Analysts also said the merger would widen the gap among strong and weak banks and boost pressure on those struggling to write off

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Al Wihdat's team

Wihdat leave today on historic visit to Bethlehem

By Aleen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan Soccer League champions Al Wihdat will go down in the country's sports archives as the first Jordanian team to visit the occupied territories since 1967 when they leave Amman for Bethlehem Wednesday on an invitation from Shahab Al Khalil Club.

During their 10-day visit Al Wihdat are scheduled to play five matches in Hebron, Jericho, Nablus, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

During a recent visit to Amman, the host club's officials said sports fans and officials in the occupied territories were enthusiastic about the momentous visit of the first Arab team to Gaza and the West Bank...and that celebrations and a busy sche-

dule awaited Al Wihdat's delegation.

The hosts also added that the team was also scheduled to meet PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat when the delegation visits the Gaza Strip on April 7.

Al Wihdat were crowned Jordan's soccer champions after finishing last season with only one defeat. They group a host of top players including Isam Mahmoud, Naser Ghadour, Abdullaah Abu Zameh, Jamal Mahmood, Hisham and Jihad Abdul Mun'um, Marwan Al Shamali, Ali Juma', Yousef

Al Amouri and Samer Bahloz. The team also includes, Ma'd Rahlal, Faisal Suleiman, Sufyan Abdullah, Mohammad Mashini, Hamdi Zaghouani, Jala'i Naim, Khaled Majdalawi, Othman Barhoumeh, Alauddin Saleh, Adnan Tawil, Mohammad Aiff, Munir Abu Hantash and Haitham Smeiri.

Established in 1943, Shahab Al Khalil were the first Palestinian team to visit Jordan in 1978 when they played Al Faisali, Al Ahli and Al Ramtha. They were also the first Palestinian team to play in Europe in 1983.

Schedule of Al Wihdat's matches

Hebron: Friday 3/1/95 Wihdat vs. Shahab Al Khalil
Jericho: Sunday 4/2 Wihdat vs. Hilal and Shahab
Nablus: Tuesday 4/4 Wihdat vs. Nablus Clubs
Gaza: Friday 7/4 Wihdat vs. Gaza Clubs
Jerusalem: Sunday 9/4 Wihdat vs. Jerusalem Clubs.

Tyson cannot escape rumors

NEW YORK (AFP) — Mike Tyson has enjoyed his first full days as a free man, but the former heavyweight boxing champion cannot escape rumors swirling about possible changes in his life.

U.S. and European newspaper reports claim Tyson is married, planning a break from promoter Don King and possibly fighting in London in

July. But there is little evidence to support any claims.

New York Newsday reported Tyson has married Monica Turner, his 28-year-old girlfriend. One version of the story had the ceremony taking place in prison,

although officials at the Indiana Youth Centre said it did not happen there.

The Georgetown Universi-

ty medical student was a frequent visitor during Tyson's prison term and was with him Sunday in Indianapolis. Tyson's visit to a Muslim mosque Sunday could have included wedding. Tyson spiritual advisor Muhammed Siddique said only that the fighter would not have considered such a move while he was a prisoner.

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Steffi Graf

Graf falls just short of No. 1

MIAMI (AFP) — Germany's Steffi Graf moved within just one point of Spain's Arantxa Sanchez in the battle for world number-one status after winning the Lipton Championships at the weekend.

WTA rankings released here Monday show Graf with an average of 298.82 points compared to 299.44 to Sanchez.

Japan's Kimiko Date rose one place to eighth following her run to the finals.

Date's compatriot Naoko Sawamatsu, Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia's Iva Majoli, Julie Dhar of France and Judith Wiesner of Austria also rose one place.

1. Arantxa Sanchez	299.44	pts.
2. Steffi Graf	298.82	
3. Mary Pierce	221.95	
4. Conchita Martinez	185.80	
5. Jana Novotna	174.97	
6. Lindsay Davenport	143.48	
7. Gabriela Sabatini	137.57	
8. Kimiko Date	128.87	
9. Natasha Zvereva	111.86	
10. Magdalena Maleeva	106.34	
11. Anke Huber	103.43	
12. Iva Majoli	95.56	
13. Mary Joe Fernandez	94.70	
14. Naoko Sawamatsu	90.42	
15. Brenda Schultz	76.27	
16. Amy Frazier	71.42	
17. Lori McNeil	68.36	
18. Julie Dhar	67.13	
19. Judith Wiesner	64.03	
20. Annapurna Coetzer	61.97	

Davis Cup

Security men gear up for Sampras and Co

PALERMO, Sicily (AFP) — Ultra-tight security surrounds the top seeded United States tennis team here as they prepare for this weekend's Davis Cup quarter-final against Italy.

Up to 40 gun-toting police officers — 25 in uniform and the rest in plain clothes — have been detailed to shadow the visiting squad, which features world number one Pete Sampras and number two Andre Agassi.

The all-star pair arrived in the Sicilian capital Monday night on a private jet from London. They travelled from New York on Concorde after contesting Sunday's final of the Lipton Championships in Miami, won by Agassi in straight sets.

Police will escort the Americans on their daily commute from the five-star Villa Iglesia Hotel overlooking the harbour to the tennis club, venue for the cup tie which starts on Friday.

In a city with a reputation for its Mafia violence, security for visiting celebrities is an everyday concern.

The American contingent has reserved 34 rooms on the second floor of the luxury hotel. They also have a suite for eating, massages and relaxing. On daily order from room service, 50 kilos of rice.

Sampras, who has been known to suffer from a delicate stomach on his foreign sorties, may not get to taste the famed Sicilian food.

Sampras and Agassi have put their rivalry for the top spot in world tennis on hold this week in order to join forces for the American team. Sampras leads the ATP Tour standings by just 227 points and when the two return to tournament play, the positions could easily change in April.

"Pete is not the enemy, you know," Agassi said about the relationship between the two stars. "I have a great amount of respect for him on a lot of levels..."

"We've both played our whole lives for moments like this. We have one thing on our mind and that is to win the Davis Cup. We're going to do that together."

Playing for Italy at the 5,100-seat venue — three times as many tickets could have been sold had the Italian federation chosen a larger club such as Milan or Rome — will be world number 19 Andrea Gaudenzi and Renzo Furlan in the singles.

Stefano Pesconsolido and Christian Brandi will take on the Australian Open champions, Jared Palmer and Richard Rennberg, in the doubles.

Agassi and Sampras were scheduled for a first hit on the slow red clay of Palermo tennis club later on Tuesday.

Will favourites' plans come through?

According to the form book defending champions Sweden, last year's finalists Russia, the United States and Germany should all be safely



Pete Sampras

through to the semi-finals of the Davis Cup by next Monday — a repeat of the 1994

The trouble is that when it comes to the men's team event, things don't always go according to plan.

Sweden, overwhelming favourites against modest Denmark, had to struggle for survival in the first round of this year's competition after losing both of the opening singles in Copenhagen.

And illness and injuries helped send experienced Australia, winners of the trophy on 26 occasions, crashing out to South Africa in Durban, while the 1992 champions Switzerland were topped in Geneva by the Netherlands.

The new Swedish captain, Carl-Axel Hageskog, must have wondered what had gone wrong in his first outing with the titleholders in the Danish capital when first Jonas Bjorkman fell to Kenneth Carlsen and then former world number-one Stefan Edberg suffered a humiliating four-set defeat against 125th-ranked Frederik Fets.

The Austrian hero against Spain was baseline powerhouse Thomas Muster who

won both his singles against Carlos Costa and Sergi Bruguera in straight sets.

Muster, who also gave Germany a scare in 1994 when he defeated Michael Stich in a five-and-a-half hour marathon, is again expected to be the main danger man against Sweden. But the Austrian number-two, Gilbert Schaller, also goes into the match full of confidence following his victory in the ATP's \$213,000 event in Casablanca on Sunday.

Russia, who dearly want a second bite of the cherry after their disappointing defeat in their first-ever appearance in the final of the competition last year, face South Africa in Moscow's Olympic Stadium.

Their exciting sixth-ranked player Yevgeny Kafelnikov will again be joined by Andrei Chesnokov, Alexander Volkov and Andrei Olhovskiy who lined up to complete the comfortable 4-1, first-round win over Belgium in Antwerp under new captain Anatoly Lepeshkin.

The South Africans, who only triumph in the event came in the form of a walk-over victory against India in the 1974 final, will plan their strategy around world number 11 Wayne Ferreira. Ferreira has been the driving force which has led the country back into the World Group from the Euro-African Zone in 1992 and the years of political isolation. He has an excellent record in the event having been beaten only once in singles matches.

Jordan National Wrestling Team off to the Acropolis Tournament

MUNIR SALAQ, Ahmad Faiz, Fahd Noial and Abed Al Hakim Yagoub are off to Athens today to represent Jordan in the International Acropolis Tournament where 23 countries will be participating.

The tournament is one of the preparatory events for the World Championships in Czechoslovakia this September. The team will also be participating in the Asian Tournament in Iran this summer.

Munir Salaq, ranking 2nd in the Middle East is an employee of the Forte Grand Amman where the team was hosted.

VACANCIES AVAILABLE

An international corporation project is seeking candidates (female, male), for a period of 18 months employment, to fill the following positions :

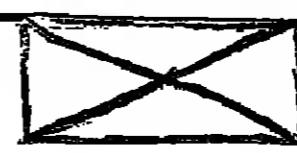
- Institutional Development Associate.
- Data Development Associate.
- Logistics Associate.

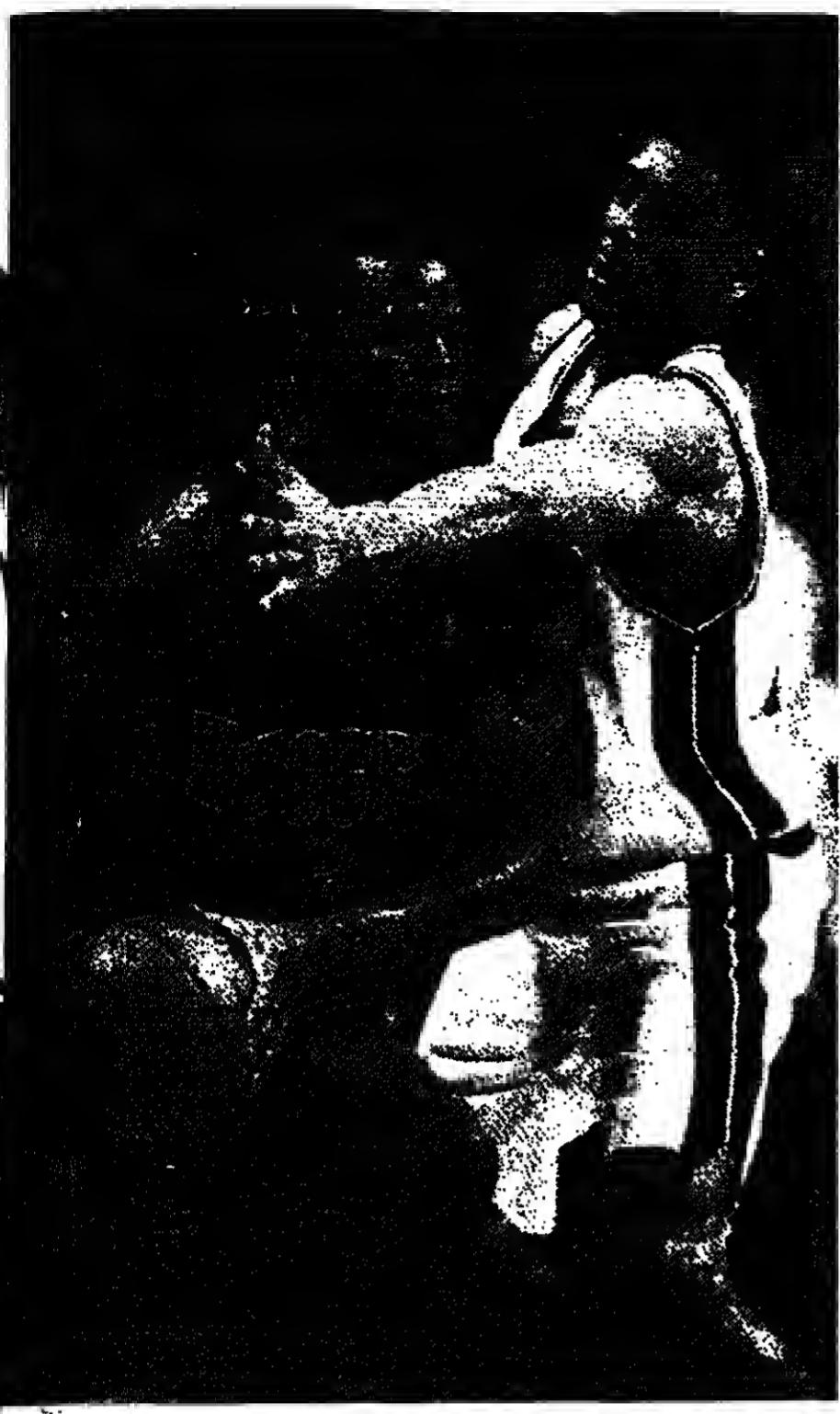
Candidates should meet the following Qualifications :

- 1- Jordanian nationality.
- 2- Minimum education level of a B.S. degree in agribusiness, or related areas. A post-graduate degree would be a plus.
- 3- Excellent capability to read, write and speak both the Arabic and English languages.
- 4- Demonstrated excellent planning and communication skills.
- 5- Strong knowledge of the use of office equipment including computers.
- 6- Vision for Jordan's future as a first rate exporter of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- 7- Must have a valid driver License.

All applicants should submit a one page statement, in English, addressing the potential future for Jordanian fresh produce exports. Dead line for receiving applications is Thursday April 6th, 1995. please, mail your C.V. to :

The Administrator
P.O. Box 9145
Amman, Jordan





Pistons' Allan Houston (right) puts his arm out to stop Denver Nuggets Dale Ellis during their NBA match (AFP photo)

purs, Jazz upset opponents

TROY (R) — Davidinson scored 10 of his 40 in a key 12-0 run in the quarter to lead the San Antonio Spurs to their eighth straight win, 114-93 victory over the Detroit Pistons.

We got really sloppy after first quarter," said insoo. All of a sudden it went to six. That's when we did them, "we're going to give me the ball."

The Pistons took their only of the game by scoring first basket and pulled in 80-74 with 1:35 remaining in the third quarter. San Antonio and Robinson countered with 12-0 surge to a commanding 92-74 with 10:39 to play.

Ian Houston scored 24 for the Pistons, who led to 2-8 in their last 10.

Indiana, Mark Jackson d 10 of his 22 points in fourth quarter as the Indiana Pacers held off the New York Nets, 98-87.

Greg Miller scored 25 for the Pacers, who sit atop the Central on 1½ games ahead of Charlotte Hornets. Indiana won four straight, and is 10-2 in its last 12.

Rick Coleman had 27 and nine rebounds for lets, who lost for the time in their last six, and are just 6-11 in last 17.

Denver, Reggie Williams scored 21 points and Ellis had five of his 16 in a key third-quarter

run to send the Denver Nuggets to a 113-104 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Nuggets pulled within a half-game of idle, the Sacramento Kings, for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

"I thought we didn't let them get easy shots," Williams said. "We got our running the fast break. We talked about defense and came out on them. We were a little tired but this is the NBA

and we've got to be ready to play."

At Utah, Karl Malone scored eight of his 23 points in a third-quarter run to lead the Utah Jazz to a 128-102 rout of the Washington Bullets.

The Jazz led, 64-59, at half-time and opened the third quarter with a 17-5 run, keyed by Malone's eight points, to take a commanding 81-64 advantage with 6:28 remaining.

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RESULTS

	San Antonio	114	Detroit	93
	Indiana	96	New Jersey	87
	Utah	128	Washington	102
	Denver	113	L.A. Clippers	104

STANDINGS

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
X-Orlando*	52	17	.754	—
X-New York	44	23	.657	7
Miami	27	42	.391	25
New Jersey	27	42	.391	25
Boston	26	42	.382	25½
Philadelphia	18	50	.265	33½
Washington	18	50	.265	33½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
X-Indiana	44	25	.638	—
X-Charlotte	42	26	.618	1½
Cleveland	38	30	.559	5½
Chicago	36	33	.522	8
Atlanta	33	35	.485	10½
Milwaukee	27	42	.391	17
Detroit	25	44	.362	19

Western Conference

Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
X-San Antonio	49	18	.731	½
X-Utah	51	19	.729	—
Houston	41	27	.603	9
Denver	33	36	.478	17½
Dallas	29	37	.439	26
Minnesota	19	50	.275	31½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
X-Phoenix	49	19	.721	—
X-Seattle	48	20	.706	1
L.A. Lakers	42	25	.627	6½
Portland	36	31	.537	12½
Sacramento	33	35	.485	16
Golden State	21	47	.309	28
L.A. Clippers	14	57	.197	36½

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2.30 3.30 6.15 9.00 P.M.

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European Soccer Championship

France face Israel without Papin, Cantona

PARIS (AFP) — Davor Suker continues to put his national side on the map and himself in the shop window as Croatia, who visit Lithuania on Wednesday, emerge as a team to be feared.

The 27-year-old Sevilla star scored twice in a 4-0 European Championship win over Ukraine on Saturday as the former Yugoslav state kept their 100 per cent record after four group four matches.

Added to his two goals for a 2-1 win in Italy in November, Suker has proven his striking ability on the big stage.

Inter Milan, Barcelona and Bayern Munich have all shown interest in the \$6 million rated striker. Sevilla signed him from Dynamo Zagreb in 1991 for \$2 million.

Apart from the Lithuania versus Croatia game, Wednesday sees 25 other European Championships matches.

In group one, France travel to Israel without influential players Jean-Pierre Papin and skipper Eric Cantona. Papin, who scored in their 2-0 win in Azerbaijan after three goalless draws, is out an injury to his left knee. And Cantona has a worldwide ban after his "kung fu" kick at a Crystal Palace fan on January 25.

Paul Le Guen takes over the captain's armband in place of Cantona.

Third-place France trail Romania and Israel, who

sent France on their spirit-crushing journey to World Cup failure.

France led Israel 2-1 at the Parc des Princes in October 1993 with seven minutes to go. Even a draw would have almost certainly put them through to the World Cup finals.

But Eyal Berkovitz and Reuven Atar scored for a 3-2 Israeli win, before Bulgaria finished France off when Emil Kostadinov scored in the dying seconds for a 2-1 win at the same venue.

Romania, who raised their world standing by beating Argentina and reaching the World Cup quarter-finals, host Poland in the group's other match.

Group leaders Romania, who include World Cup stars Gheorghe Hagi, Ilie Dumitrescu, and Florin Radulescu, defend their 100 per cent record after four matches.

Spain, who play host to Belgium, are one of the few teams who have virtually qualified already. With maximum points from four games — including a 4-1 win in Belgium, their heaviest home defeat for 43 years — coach Javier Clemente can virtually bank on a finale place.

Yet should Clemente covet records, he will have the target of emulating France, who won all their qualifying matches before the 1992 competition.

Clemente has made one change buy calling up Tenerife

it's Argentine-born striker Juan Antonio Pizzi in place of Deportivo La Coruna's Julio Salinas.

Belgium appear to be fading off the scene. Belgium, 1980 European championship runners-up and 1986 World Cup semi-finalists, risk failing to qualify for their third consecutive time in this event.

Belgium, already without keeper Michel Preudhomme and midfielder Franky Van Der Elst, who have both retired internationally, have lost playmaker Enzo Scifo and sweeper and captain Georges Grun through injury.

Denmark, who lost 3-0 in Spain in November, visit

still without Sweden's Tomas Brodin, who injured his left ankle in a 2-0 win over Hungary in November, travel to Turkey.

Coach Tommy Svensson picked seven players from European Cup quarter-finalists Gothenburg. Of those, Magnus Johansson is included for the first time and Anderlecht forward Far Zetterberg is also called up.

Italy put last November's home loss to Croatia behind them with a 4-1 win at home to Estonia on Saturday. Goals from Demetrio Albertini, Fabrizio Ravanelli and two from Gianfranco Zola put their qualifying chances back on route.

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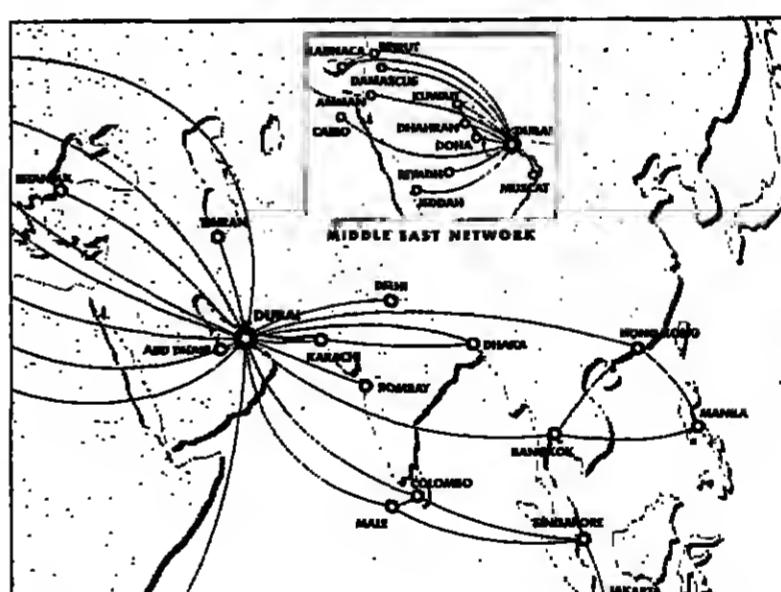
Flight	Depart Amman	Arrive Dubai
Mon, Sat	19.45	00.45 *
Thu	17.45	00.45 *
Fri	Depart Dubai	Arrive Amman
Mon, Sat	15.15	18.45
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convenient onward connections to cities throughout the Middle East,

the Far East and the Indian Subcontinent.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Morocco sets up liaison office in Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Morocco has set up a liaison office in Tel Aviv to become the third Arab country to be represented in the Jewish state, Israeli officials revealed Tuesday. The mission run by three diplomats was set up 12 days ago in a rented apartment in an elegant Tel Aviv district that once housed Zaire's embassy. The official opening will be in a few days after final preparations. But the discreet opening contrasts with Israel's inauguration of its mission in Rabat in October attended by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres amid much pomp. Yitzhak Levanon, head of the North Africa department at the foreign ministry, welcomed the arrival of the Moroccan diplomats who are led by Talal Gofrani.

Gulf 'prince' arrested after high-life spree

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian police have caught a con-man who swindled his way into the Cairo jet-set by posing as a Gulf prince, a newspaper reported Tuesday. More than 30 large companies and businessmen were taken in by the Egyptian who put on a false Gulf accent, said the Egyptian Gazette. He stayed in five-star hotels in the capital and in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria and spent other people's money extravagantly. Police discovered that the "prince," whose identity was not revealed, had stolen his car from a belly-dancer befriended at a party. The man had been arrested several times previously.

Iraq seized car of U.N. worker

KUWAIT (AP) — Iraqi police confiscated the car of a U.N.-contracted worker after he entered recently into a demilitarized zone on the Iraqi side of the border, a U.N. spokesman said Tuesday. But the man, who crossed the border six days after Iraqi police apprehended two Americans in the same area, was never detained because he had proper authorisation, said the spokesman, Salim Fahmawi. He refused to identify the man further. U.S. television network NBC reported Monday that an American working for the United Nations was briefly detained on that day, March 19, for crossing the border illegally. "The matter was resolved on the spot," Mr. Fahmawi said, but added that the vehicle was confiscated because it had Kuwaiti licence plates. Only U.N. cars are allowed to move within the demilitarised zone on both sides of the border.

All Mahdi warns fighting may resume

DJIBOUTI (AFP) — North Mogadishu warlord Ali Mabdi Mohammad warned here Tuesday that inter-clan fighting could resume at the Somali capital's port and airport "at any moment." He was speaking after talks with Djibouti Prime Minister Barkat Gourad Hamoud on the situation in Somalia since the withdrawal of U.N. troops early this month following an inconclusive two-year peace mission. The self-styled "president" will take his delegation on to Ethiopia and Sudan, two countries actively mediating in Somalia's clan warfare. He accused his rival, Mohammad Farah Aideed, who controls most of south Mogadishu, of hampering all peace efforts.

Syria rebukes U.S. Senator Helms

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria on Tuesday rebuked U.S. Senator Jesse Helms for accusing it of sponsoring terrorism and drug trafficking. The attack in the Tishrib government was an apparent response to a reported pledge by Mr. Helms, a right-wing North Carolina Republican who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to oppose any peace agreement that involved U.S. financial aid to Syria. "There is not one reason that could justify Helms' hatred of Syria," the daily said. "Syria does not blackmail the American taxpayer, as Israel does, nor does it receive billions of dollars annually from the American treasury," it added. Israeli Labour Party lawmaker Avigdor Kahalani, who opposes withdrawal on the Golan Heights, relayed Mr. Helms' comments in a March 18 interview on Israeli army radio. "He thinks that Syrian President Hafez Al Assad can not be trusted, and he thinks that Syria is a country of drugs and terrorism," Mr. Kahalani said.

Weizman to visit Germany in September

BONN (AFP) — Israel's President Ezer Weizman will go to Germany for an official three-day visit in September, the German presidency said Tuesday, ending speculation he would take part in Bonn's celebrations in May of the fall of Nazism. A statement from the Israeli embassy in Bonn said the question of Mr. Weizman's participation in Bonn's May 8 celebration of the 50th anniversary of the fall of Nazism did not arise. Mr. Weizman will be in Israel on that date to take part in a number of ceremonies marking the anniversary of the end of war, the embassy statement said.

Sudan sees new era in ties with Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Sudan's Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha looked forward Tuesday to turning a new page in Khartoum's stormy relations with Cairo after talks with his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa. "This is a good start towards reaching an understanding and a good omen for turning a new page in relations between the two countries," Mr. Taha told reporters. Mr. Taha described as "positive" the meeting with Mr. Musa on the sidelines of a two-day session of the Organisation of African Unity. "Bilateral relations were discussed objectively and clearly as well as questions of concern to the Arab Nation," he added.

Ramos to seek clemency for Filipino in UAE

MANILA (AFP) — President Fidel Ramos is to appeal for clemency for a Filipino worker sentenced to die by firing squad in the United Arab Emirates for murder, sources at the Philippine foreign office said Tuesday. The sources, who asked not to be identified, said Mr. Ramos would write to UAE President Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan asking for a pardon for John Aquino, who was convicted in the 1989 stabbing death of Indian national Amerjet Lal Jaker Sard. The Philippine leader has also ordered full legal assistance to another Filipina being tried in the UAE for murdering her employer, who had allegedly raped her. The counsel for 16-year-old Sarah Balabagan informed the foreign office here he will invoke the "defense of life and honour" in a bid to gain her acquittal. Ms. Balabagan claimed she stabbed her Arab employer dead during a struggle after he had raped her in July 1994.

Britain to resume flights to Syria

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Britain is to resume flights to Syria next month after a nine-year suspension following a foiled bomb attack at London's Heathrow airport, the British embassy here said Tuesday. A delegation from British Airways and the Transport Ministry agreed to restore air links during a visit to Damascus last week, the embassy said. British Airways will operate two London-Damascus flights a week, while Syrian Arab Airlines will run four flights and British Mediterranean two.

20 drugs smugglers killed in clashes in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian security services have killed 20 drugs smugglers in clashes in northeastern Iran and seized 2,058 kilogrammes of opium, the official agency IRNA said Tuesday. Security forces told IRNA they had also seized a large amount of arms and ammunition in clashes in Torbat Heydarieh in Khorasan province, 90 kilometres east of Tehran close to the border with Afghanistan, over the past few days.

Regent meets U.S. general

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the Regent, on Tuesday received the commander-in-chief of the U.S. Central Command, General J.H. Binford Peay III, and reviewed with him bilateral relations and means of enhancing them. Prince Abdullah and Gen. Binford discussed scopes of military cooperation and exchange of expertise.

The audience was attended by His Majesty King Hussein's advisor Mohamad Rasoul Al



His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the Regent, on Tuesday receives Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III (centre), commander-in-chief of the U.S. Central Command (Petra photo).

Hafez Mirai also received Gen. Binford and reviewed with him the situation in various parts of the world. They also discussed scopes of bilateral cooperation

Israel not yet ready for Golan pledge

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Tuesday that Israel was not ready to tell Syria how far it is willing to withdraw from the Golan Heights.

"We have to leave ourselves room for bargaining," Mr. Peres told Israel Radio. "Because the problem isn't just a withdrawal, but the type of peace, along with security arrangements, a timetable and Lebanon as well."

Mr. Peres also dismissed a report that the United States made a secret promise to remove Syria from a blacklist of nations sponsoring "terrorism."

"I don't know of such a thing, but I certainly doubt the truth of this report," Mr. Peres said.

The Washington Times, quoting the Compass news service, earlier this week said President Bill Clinton paved the way for a renewal of the Israel-Syria talks by making such a promise to Syria.

Negotiations between Israel and Syria resumed ear-

lier this month after a three-month suspension. The negotiators are the Israeli and Syrian ambassadors to Washington.

Israel has called for higher-level talks, but Syrian President Hafez Al Assad has rejected the request. He wants Israel to declare its willingness to withdraw from all of the Golan before he agrees to a summit with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Israeli foreign ministry officials, meanwhile, said that if Syria is serious about making peace with Israel, it must stop its support for militants and hardline Palestinian groups.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has invited hardline Palestinians opposed to the peace process to settle in the autonomous Gaza Strip, Mr. Arafat's spokesman said Monday.

The statement by spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeima followed a report by an Israeli foreign ministry official that the United States had informed Israel that Syria was

preparing to expel the heads of the hardline "rejection front."

"We say to these Palestinians that the (Palestinian) Authority is holding out a hand to them and we call on them to come and settle in Gaza to contribute to the building of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital," Mr. Rudeima said.

The Israeli foreign ministry official said, "Washington has the impression that the Syrian authorities have sent signals to heads of organisations opposed to (Palestinian) autonomy that they should prepare to leave."

"But we remain cautious because this is only an American impression, it is still vague," he added.

Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam met recently with Palestinian opposition officials and a leader of the Lebanese Hezbollah to warn them that "their days in the Syrian capital are numbered," the daily Maariv wrote Monday.

However, two Syrian-based groups denied the re-

ports as "lies."

Meanwhile, Syria accused Israel of making unacceptable demands and said there had been no progress in peace talks which resumed in Washington this month.

"How could progress be made while Israel wants to impose normalisation (of relations), ending of the boycott, opening of borders and other unjustified demands?" Syria's government daily said.

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"Israel's policy and behaviour provide no encouragement for one to express the minimum level of optimism for progress," Al Thawra said.

Bahrain unrest continues

MANAMA (AP) — Students at a girls' school smashed windows and destroyed chairs Tuesday as anti-government protests flared again in Bahrain.

Overnight, agitators burned a small branch of the Bahrain Islamic Bank in Jidhafs, a densely-populated Muslim Shiite suburb where tension has remained high since two weeks of riots in December rocked this small island.

The disturbances have flared mainly in Shiite Muslim districts to press for the restoration of parliament and jobs for the 30,000 Bahrainis they estimate as unemployed, mainly impoverished Shiites.

Shiites make up about one-half of indigenous Bahrainis. About one-third of the island's 500,000 population are expatriates. The rest, like the ruling Al Khalifa family, belong to the Sunni sect.

The protesters, some of whom have called for the downfall of the Al Khalifa, also demand the release of detainees rounded up in scattered bouts of unrest over the past three months.

A statement from an opposition group, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, called on the International Committee of the Red Cross to check on "the inhumanitarian situation the detainees are living, and the brutal acts of torture."

The statement was faxed to the Associated Press in Cyprus.

Tuesday's disturbances at the Al Manama Secondary School for Girls in a Muslim Shiite area quickly abated, according to teachers at the school.

Residents in the distant Isa town suburb also reported brief demonstrations at a local girls' secondary school, but said the students had been stirred by boys who sneaked onto the premises before classes started.

Over the past days, small groups of high school boys have chanted anti-government slogans within earshot of the U.S. embassy or the criminal investigation department. They usually commit acts of vandalism and run off before riot police appear.

The Education Ministry prohibits police from entering any school premises, but small amounts of tear-gas have been fired from outside the gates.

More than 10,000 'Arab Afghans' are active — Jane's

LONDON (AFP) — Thousands of guerrillas, trained and hardened in the 15-year Afghan war, are fanning out across the Arab World and beyond as soldiers of fortune in a fundamentalist revolution, according to Jane's intelligence review.

More than 10,000 of these "Arab veterans of the Afghan war" are today active across North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, China and Kashmir, the Philippines and Tajikistan and the U.S. eastern seaboard, the London monthly says in its April edition.

Trained and armed with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, both by the West and Arab states, these "Muslim zealots" are likely to surface in "Islamic eruptions" anywhere, said Jane's.

In particular, the Group Islamic Army (GIA), held responsible for killing scores of foreigners and Algerian intellectuals in and around Algiers, is dominated by the "Afghans," said the review.

Successive GIA leaders, including Tayeh Al Afghani, arrested in 1992, Sid Ahmad Mourad, killed by police in March 1994, and Abu Abdallah Ahmad, alias Sherif Gousni, killed last September, were all "Afghan" war veterans, it said.

Of the approximately 2,000 "Afghans" in Egypt, several hundred are active in Islamic fundamentalist groups. One of the most influential, said Jane's, is Mohammad Shawki Al Islambouli, brother of Khaled Al Islambouli, who was hanged in 1982 for his part in the assassination of President Anwar Sadat.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there are between 500 and 1,000 non-Bosnian Muslim fighters from a dozen countries.

Some 300 of them are "Afghan" veterans with a Mujahideen company operating alongside Bosnian army in Zenica, said Jane's.

In particular, the Group Islamic Army (GIA), held responsible for killing scores of foreigners and Algerian intellectuals in and around Algiers, is dominated by the "Afghans," said the review.

It said Arab veterans of Afghanistan had also been identified fighting with secessionists in Chechnya.

The Chechen capital Grozny "became" a key transit point for Arab veterans of the Afghan war after the collapse of the Soviet Union," said Jane's. "The Russians could well now become targets for the 'Afghans'."

Pakistan, under pressure from Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and the United States, recently stepped up a drive to hunt down and expel the "Afghan" veterans, many of whom are fugitives in their homelands, said Jane's.

Last February, it said, Pakistani authorities arrested and extradited to the United States an Iraqi national, Ramzi Ahmad Yousef, charged in connection with the World Trade Centre bombing.

Many such fugitives, said Jane's, take temporary refuge in Iran, Sudan, the former South Yemen and in northern Iraq before they are filtered out to other countries in the Arab World."

At least 100 said dead in Iraqi Kurd clashes

ANKARA (R) — A Kurdish group said on Tuesday at least 100 people had died in clashes between two Iraqi Kurdish factions in northern Iraq, already hit by a Kurdish military incursion.

Shazad Saib, Ankara representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said forces from the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) had attacked several PUK positions in the key city of Erbil on Monday.

"At least 100 people have been killed on both sides since the KDP forces attacked eight PUK positions in and around Erbil yesterday morning," Mr. Saib told Reuters.

The reported fighting took place about 160 kilometres south of where 35,000 Turkish troops are fighting another Kurdish group, the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which is fighting for a separate state in southwest Turkey.

Erbil, seat of the region's paralysed Kurdish administration, has been a focal point for clashes since last December. It is held by the PUK.

It is partially surrounded by opposing Kurdish fighters while troops loyal to President Saddam Hussein are positioned about 100 kilometres to the south.

The KDP blames the PUK for a carbomb explosion in Zakho in February that killed 76 people and wounded about 100. It also accuses the PUK of ransacking Erbil.

The inter-Kurdish conflict slackened last month after a joint U.S.-Turkish delegation warned both sides to stop fighting or risk losing Western sympathy. Turkish officials said then about 500 people had died.

Carter brokers ceasefire in Sudan's 12-year war

KHARTOUM (AP) — Calling it a chance to help hundreds of thousands of people, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter brokered a two-month ceasefire between Sudan's government and rebels locked in one of Africa's longest and bloodiest wars.

Mr. Carter, who is on a nine-day visit to Africa, had sought the truce to allow health workers into southern Sudan, where a parasite called the guinea worm disease thrives. The parasite causes blindness, but can be treated by a single tablet.

Last year, it affected at least 160,000 people in the Indian subcontinent and Africa, a third of them in Sudan.

The primary purpose of this agreement is to permit the leaders and citizens of Sudan and international agencies ... to carry out a major effort to eradicate guinea worm, prevent river blindness and immunize children against polio and other diseases," Mr. Carter said in a statement released Tuesday by the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.

In Khartoum, he said the ceasefire opens "an opportunity to alleviate the suffering of literally hundreds of thousands of Sudanese who live in the southern part of this country."

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Peace talks between the government and the mainly Christian and animist rebels have not produced any results, and numerous ceasefires have been broken.

Sudan's civil war began in 1983, making it one of Africa's longest. An estimated 1.3 million people have died in the conflict and from famines caused by the fighting. Millions more have been uprooted, some living in wretched conditions in refugee camps near the capital.

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